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ABSTRACT

This volume is one of 62 in a series of handbooks designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about social, economic, political, and military institutions and practices of various countries. This handbook seeks to supply an integrated and comprehensive exposition and analysis of the entire society of Honduras while keeping interpretations and judgments to a minimum. A glossary of Spanish terms used in the text is provided, as well as an index. (Author/DJB)

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# AREA HANDBOOK
for
HONDURAS

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AREA HANDBOOK
for
HONDURAS

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FOREWORD

This volume is one of a series of handbooks prepared by Foreign Area Studies (FAS) of The American University, designed to be useful to military and other personnel who need a convenient compilation of basic facts about the social, economic, political, and military institutions and practices of various countries. The emphasis is on objective description of the nation's present society and the kinds of possible or probable changes that might be expected in the future. The handbook seeks to present as full and as balanced an integrated exposition as limitations on space and research time permit. It was compiled from information available in openly published material. An extensive bibliography is provided to permit recourse to other published sources for more detailed information. There has been no attempt to express any specific point of view or to make policy recommendations. The contents of the handbook represent the work of the authors and FAS and do not represent the official view of the United States government.

An effort has been made to make the handbook as comprehensive as possible. It can be expected, however, that the material, interpretations, and conclusions are subject to modification in the light of new information and developments. Such corrections, additions, and suggestions for factual, interpretive, or other change as readers may have will be welcomed for use in future revisions. Comments may be addressed to:

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PREFACE

Honduras, at the close of 1970, was still recovering from the economic and social effects of a brief war with neighboring El Salvador in July 1969. This Central American country, large in size but small in population, was striving to achieve social progress despite difficulties ensuing from a history of political instability. The next presidential election was scheduled to occur in 1971. With a long Caribbean coastline this country forms a vital part of the isthmus linking North and South America. It is a member of the Central American Common Market, which until 1970 was one of the most successful regional economic integration movements. In 1970, partly as a result of the conflict with El Salvador, the member nations were seeking a reorganization of that institution.

This handbook seeks to supply an integrated and comprehensive exposition and analysis of the entire society of Honduras. There are several excellent works, both in English and Spanish, concerning the country, but most are either specific studies of one aspect of the society or describe the situation in broad, general terms. The *Area Handbook for Honduras* is not intended to replace any of these studies, but rather to supplement the available material with a unified treatment of the whole society. Interpretations and judgments are kept to a minimum and are based only on available data as found in documented sources rather than on field study.

Grateful acknowledgment is due several people who have given their time and knowledge in aiding this study. In particular, the authors wish to thank Daniel S. Blanchard for the use of his excellent background paper on the Honduras-El Salvador dispute. Responsibility for all facts and interpretations found in the study, however, must rest with the authors.

Spanish usage is based on *Appleton's New Cuyas Dictionary* (Fifth Edition). Place names follow the rulings of the United States Board on Geographic Names, United States Department of the Interior. Spanish words are held to a minimum, are defined at first appearance and, if used frequently, are found in the Glossary appended to the book.

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COUNTRY SUMMARY

1. COUNTRY: Republic of Honduras. Colony of Spain 1524—1821, governed from Guatemala City by a Captaincy General. In 1822 annexed to Mexican Empire. From 1823 to 1838 was part of the United Provinces of Central America. Completely independent since 1838.

2. GOVERNMENT: Independent republic with three branches. Executive headed by president assisted by a cabinet. Unicameral legislature known as the Congress. Judicial branch composed of Supreme Court of Justice, several courts of appeal, and lower courts.

3. CONSTITUTION: Constitution of June 6, 1965, still in effect at end of 1970. Country has had twelve constitutions during its history.

4. POPULATION: Nearly 2.6 million in 1970; average annual growth rate 3.4 percent. About 90 percent are whites, *mestizos*, and acculturated Indians. Remainder are unacculturated Indians of various tribes, Negroes, and resident foreigners.

5. SIZE: Approximately 43,300 square miles.

6. TOPOGRAPHY: Two major mountain ranges, each with several branches, bisect the country northwest to southeast. Tropical lowlands found on Caribbean coast and Pacific coast. Extensive fertile valleys and plateaus lie between mountain branches.

7. LANGUAGES: Spanish is official language. English spoken by many Negroes, whites, and by a number of native Spanish speakers. Some Indians speak distinct languages that are dying out as they learn Spanish.

8. RELIGIONS: Roman Catholic religion professed by 89 percent of population, but church and state are separate, and there is complete religious freedom. Twenty Protestant sects make up most of balance.

9. EDUCATION: Literacy rate is less than 50 percent. Elementary education is free and compulsory. Secondary education is free but not compulsory. Higher education is provided by the National University of Honduras and several technical and vocational schools.

10. HEALTH: Death rate reported at 9.5 per 1,000 inhabitants in 1964. Prevalent diseases include gastritis, enteritis, and tuberculosis.

11. CLIMATE: Tropical on Caribbean coast up to 2,000 feet and on Pacific coast up to 1,500 feet. Temperate above these altitudes.

12. JUSTICE: Independent judiciary. Supreme Court of Justice,

several courts of appeal, departmental courts, justices of the peace, and special courts. Jury system not used.

13. ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS: Departments (18), Central District (1), and municipalities (281). Departments have no self-government; Central District is seat of government; municipalities have local authority through an elected mayor and municipal council.

14. ECONOMY: Basically agricultural and small but growing industrial base.

15. EXPORTS: Bananas, coffee, wood, silver, meat, and miscellaneous products. United States, West Germany, and Central American Common Market are leading customers.

16. IMPORTS: Consumer goods, raw materials, and capital goods. United States, West Germany, and Central American Common Market are leading suppliers.

17. FINANCE: Lempira is unit of currency, divided into 100 centavos. Exchange rate from 1926 and as of late 1970 was 2 lempiras for 1 United States dollar. Most commercial banks are privately owned, but some state-owned banks exist.

18. COMMUNICATIONS: *Telephone and telegraph*. About 12,000 automatic telephone lines existed in late 1970. Forty-three cities have small manually operated telephone systems. Telegraph service provided by the government to 300 towns. *Radio*. Twenty-three AM and FM stations, mostly private. *Television*. One company operating three channels.

19. TRANSPORTATION: *Railroads*. Three systems, two private and one government owned. Total length of track about 650 miles. *Navigable rivers*. Patuca, Coco, and Ulúa for short distances. *Roads*. Over 2,500 miles, mostly unpaved.

20. PORTS: Five major seaports on Caribbean coast; Puerto Cortés, La Ceiba, Tela, Roatán, and Trujillo. One port, Amapala, on south coast.

21. AIRFIELDS: About 130 airfields in country, almost 100 have grass strips. Largest airport is La Mesa International Airport at San Pedro Sula.

22. PRINCIPAL AIRLINES: Four domestic airlines. Major one is Air Service of Honduras, Inc., partially owned by the government. National Air Transport, National Airlines of Honduras, and Air Associates are privately owned. Air Service of Honduras, Inc., and National Air Transport also provide international service.

23. MERCHANT MARINE: One privately owned domestic company, the Honduran Steamship Company, with about twenty-five vessels. Hundreds of other vessels are also registered but are flags of convenience ships never calling at Honduran ports.

24. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES: No military defense agreements. A military assistance agreement with

the United States since 1954. Several commercial and economic agreements, most with Central American countries.

25. AID PROGRAMS: Numerous and varied. United States, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), Inter-American Development Bank, Central American Bank for Economic Integration are major providers.

26. INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS: United Nations, Organization of American States, Central American Common Market.

27. ARMED FORCES: Total strength of regular armed forces about 6,000 men, mostly army personnel, which number approximately 5,000. The air force has about 500 men, and the coast guard has about 100 members. The Special Security Corps, numbering between 2,000 and 3,000, carry out civil police functions, but most members are drawn from the regular armed forces.

HONDURAS

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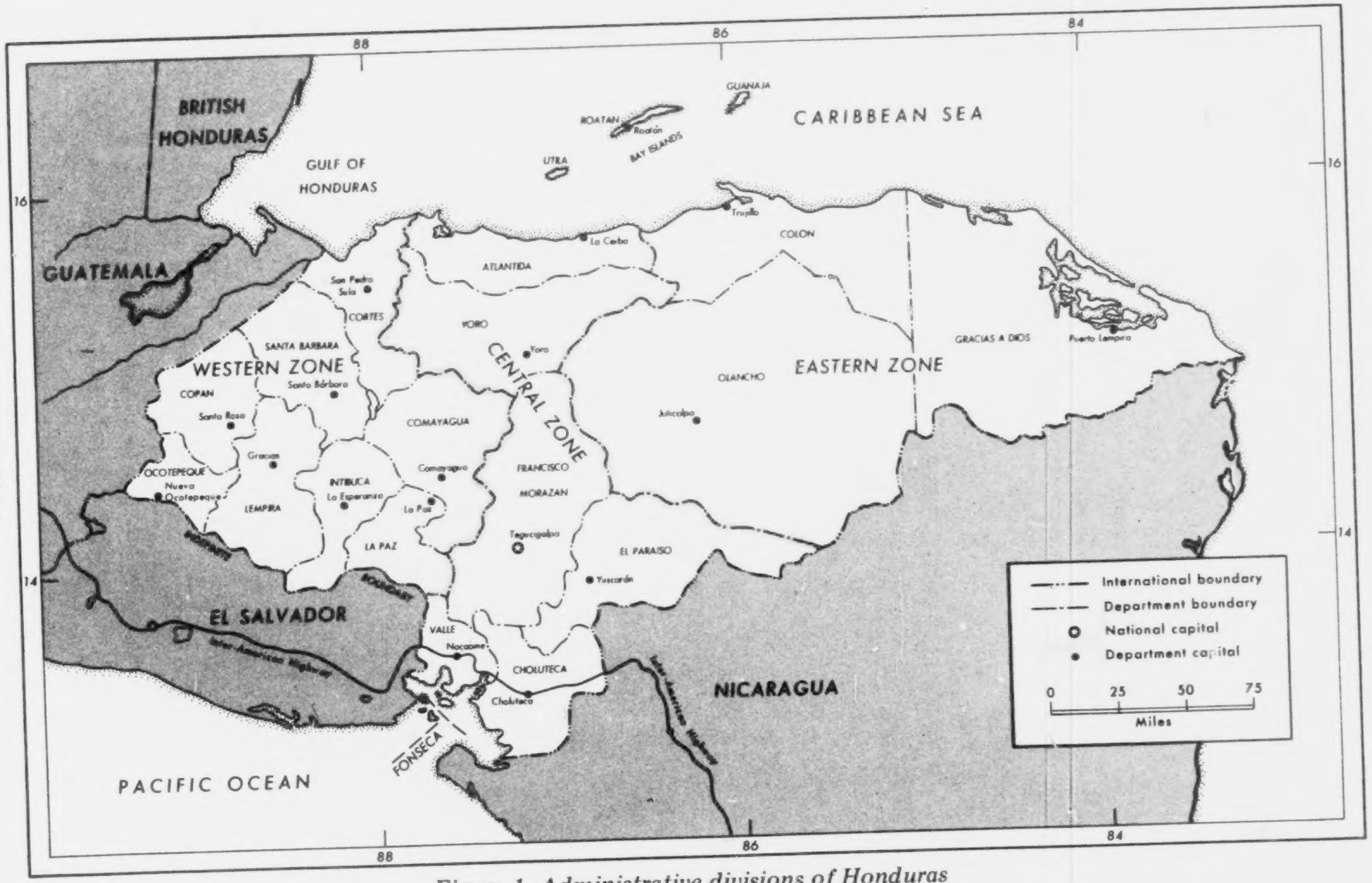
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BRITISH HONDURAS
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La Ceiba
COLON
ATLANTIDA
San Pedro Sula
CORTES
YORO
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COPAN
Santa Rosa
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OCOTEPEQUE
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LEMPIRA
INTIBUCA
La Esperanza
La Paz
LA PAZ
COMAYAGUA
Comayagua
CENTRAL ZONE
FRANCISCO MORAZAN
Tegucigalpa
OLANCHO
Juticalpa
EASTERN ZONE
GRACIAS A DIOS
Puerto Lempira
EL PARAISO
Yuscarán
VALLE
Nacaome
CHOLUTECA
Choluteca
FONSECA
EL SALVADOR
Inter-American Highway
NICARAGUA
PACIFIC OCEAN
International boundary
Department boundary
National capital
Department capital
0
25
50
75
Miles

Figure 1. Administrative divisions of Honduras

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

In late 1970 the Republic of Honduras was still recovering from the results of a brief but serious war in July 1969 with neighboring El Salvador. The conflict slowed down the economy from its previous rapid rate of growth, altered trade relations within the Central American Common Market, and threatened to affect national political processes.

A long history of peaceful relations between Honduras and El Salvador was broken by the five-day conflict. The war grew out of a combination of factors: an ill-defined border, large-scale illegal Salvadorean emigration to Honduras, expulsion of many of the illegal immigrants, and rising nationalist sentiments in both countries.

One year later relations still had not been restored, but the Organization of American States, which was acting as mediator, had succeeded in establishing a demilitarized zone of nearly two miles on both sides of the border. An armistice agreement was signed in June 1970 between the two countries, which was guaranteed by the governments of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Under the agreement both sides withdrew their troops from the demilitarized zone except for thirteen-man police patrols armed with small weapons to prevent civilians from provoking hostile acts. All civilians residing in the demilitarized zone were disarmed, and the Organization of American States stationed observers there (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

The country is a constitutional republic, but constitutions have not been longlasting. Since 1825 twelve have been promulgated; the 1965 Constitution was still in effect in late 1970. The rapid turnover was caused by a need to emphasize new ideals and the discrediting of previous charters because they had been associated with ousted governments. The latest constitution contains social guarantees of labor, family, and education (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

The government is highly centralized, the president exercising much authority despite the principle of separation of powers. A unicameral legislature usually responds to the desires of the president, and the judiciary has never exerted an independent role.

Despite the centralization of power in the hands of the chief executive, the history of the country has been characterized by irregular and sometimes violent changes of government as the military shifted its allegiance. There were 120 presidential changes between 1824 and 1970. On the other hand, some particularly powerful presidents were able to continue in office for long periods. The most notable was President Tiburcio Carías Andino, who ruled from 1932 to 1948. In 1970 the president was General Osvaldo López Arellano, who was elected by the 1965 Constituent Assembly after having directly ruled through the military since October 1963, when he led a coup against the government ten days before the scheduled elections. President López's term was due to expire in 1971, but there were indications in late 1970 that the election might be postponed until the turbulent aftermath of the war with El Salvador had subsided.

A number of political parties exist, but only two are important: the Liberal Party and the National Party. Both of them trace their ancestry to the eighteenth century, although their philosophies and goals have changed. The Liberal Party has slowly become associated with social reforms since the 1920s and was most significant from 1954 to 1963. The National Party is more conservative but in 1970 was divided into disputing factions that seemed to diminish its future effective role.

The most influential and powerful interest group in the country is the military. All presidents have had to retain the backing and loyalty of the armed forces in order to maintain their office. Lesser political roles are played by business groups, labor, students, and teachers (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

The history of the country has been turbulent. Christopher Columbus discovered Honduras on August 14, 1502, during his fourth voyage and gave the country its name, which in Spanish means 'depths,' after the deep waters off the coast. Various Spanish expeditions fought for control of the region until 1526, when a measure of stability finally prevailed, but jurisdictional disputes for the territory continued until 1570 when it was placed under the control of the Captaincy General of Guatemala (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

Internally, regional rivalries, which prevented a national consensus from developing, continued to exist between various cities and areas of the country until the middle of the nineteenth century. The country became independent after the breakup of the United Provinces of Central America, which existed from 1822 to 1838. Central America as a whole had declared its independence from Spain on September 15, 1821, but was annexed to Mexico in 1822. The union with Mexico lasted less than one year. Philosophical differences between liberals and conservatives soon arose, and the United Provinces started to disintegrate. Honduras declared its complete independence on October 26, 1838.

Lacking any sense of national unity, the new country soon became dominated by foreign influence as particular leaders attempted to achieve personal power over rival political groups. Guatemala played the most significant role during most of the nineteenth century, and maintenance of good relations with that country became the prime goal of Honduran presidents since poor relations could cause their downfall. As Guatemalan influence faded in the late nineteenth century, Nicaragua started to exert the dominant influence, but that influence also declined after the twentieth century began and Honduran presidents started to exert themselves more fully.

For over thirty years in the eighteenth century Great Britain occupied the Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía) of Honduras and much of the Mosquito Coast along the Caribbean. These territories were only relinquished to Honduras at the strong urging of the United States, which was becoming interested in the possibility of an interocean canal through Central America. After Great Britain's role declined, private United States citizens and companies started to exert economic influence (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

With an area of 43,277 square miles. the country is the second largest of the Central American republics. It is bordered on the west by Guatemala, on the southwest by El Salvador, on the south for 77 miles by the Pacific Ocean, on the east and northeast by Nicaragua, and on the north for 400 miles by the Caribbean Sea. The north coast is frequently referred to in the country as the Atlantic coast.

Over 80 percent of the land is mountainous, two distinct major ranges of the Central American Cordillera dividing the country into northwest and southeast sections. The mountainous terrain contributes to the relative isolation of population pockets and the growth of regional rivalries. Numerous small, fertile valleys and plateaus are found within the mountains. Lowlands are found on both coasts, running from twenty-five to seventy-five miles inland. The lowlands are generally hot and humid all year and until the twentieth century were sparsely settled. The climate in the rest of the country varies with altitude. The higher elevations generally have an agreeable climate, hottest daytime temperatures ranging from 75°F. to 80°F. (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions).

The country is divided into eighteen departments and the Central District. The Central District is the seat of government and consists of Tegucigalpa and Comayagüela. Tegucigalpa is the capital and chief commercial center. Departments are headed by appointed governors and are further divided into municipalities (which are akin to townships) having smaller subdivisions equivalent to villages or hamlets. Officials of municipalities and villages are popularly elected.

The population was estimated in 1970 to be 2,583,000, and the density was less than 60 per square mile. The growth rate was 3.4 percent, and the maintenance of services to the growing population was putting a strain on the economy. Half the population was under seventeen years of age in 1969. Despite the low overall density rate, the population was actually concentrated in one-half of the country. About 92 percent of the people were settled on 56 percent of the land. There were few major cities; 75 percent of the population was considered to be rural. Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula were the only cities having over 100,000 persons.

Most of the people racially are *mestizos*, a mixture of Indian and European, predominantly Spanish, blood; however, a more common term used to designate the population is *ladino*, which is a cultural rather than a racial term. Simply, *ladino* means anyone not manifesting Indian traits, and by this definition *mestizos*, Negroes, whites, and even pureblooded Indians who are acculturated can be part of the *ladino* culture. About 91 percent of the population is said to be *ladino*.

Several thousand fullblooded Indians reside in the country, descendants of the nearly half million originally in the territory at the time of the conquest. The Indians constitute about 3 percent of the population. The most numerous are the Lenca, who are considered a modified Indian group with some traits similar to *ladinos*. The Lenca constitute 70 percent of all the Indians in the country, numerous small groups making up the balance.

There are two other small important ethnic groups. One is the Black Caribs, descendants of runaway slaves and Carib Indians, who live mostly along the north coast. The other is English-speaking blacks and whites who inhabit the Bay Islands off the Atlantic coast and are called Bay Islanders. They are usually Protestant and maintain a culture similar to that of the English-speaking Antilleans (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

Most of the people are Roman Catholic, but there are not enough priests to care for their religious needs. There is about 1 priest per 10,000 persons. Several Protestant sects also exist, and the number of their adherents is growing.

The family is the basic social unit, and kinship ties and obligations are strong. This frequently results in nepotism in government and business. The father is the head of the family and sole source of authority. Even though women are achieving greater freedom, male dominance remains a basic value of society.

The twentieth century has seen a gradual emergence of a middle class. Society, although stratified, is not rigid, and upward mobility is possible. Wealth and education are replacing lineage as criteria for social classification. Social values have evolved from the Spanish tradition wherein the individual is regarded as a unique being and of more importance than society.

The majority of the people live in inadequate and deficient shelter, and the seriousness of the housing situation is one of the several social problems of the country. Most houses are built by their occupants from locally available material and contain no more than one or two rooms, the floor being usually of dirt. Houses in urban areas are of better quality and composition and usually are larger in size but frequently are overcrowded.

The illiteracy rate is the highest in Central America, despite the government's attempt to improve and increase educational facilities. About one-fourth of the annual budget is spent on education. Many children do not finish primary school, partly because of a need to go to work or to help their families and partly because most of the schools, especially those in rural areas, do not offer all the required classes. Students who want to continue their education have to journey long distances to attend schools that do provide all the required classes. The high illiteracy rate historically has prevented intellectual expression from manifesting itself until fairly recently.

The economy is based upon agriculture, most production being a small-scale operation. Only banana plantations, cotton farms, and some coffee farms are large operations. Bananas and coffee are the major exports. The more important food crops grown are corn, beans, rice, and sugar. These crops are usually grown in sufficient quantities to meet demand, and any excess production is exported. Livestock raising is also important, increasing amounts of beef (live, fresh, frozen, and chilled) being exported. The government stresses the development of the livestock industry because of the foreign exchange earned by meat exports. The country has good forest resources, and there is a growing timber and lumber industry; however, there is much wastage and improper exploitation of the forests.

The industrial sector of the economy is the smallest of those in Central America, but it is the second most important and the fastest growing segment. Most industry is small and consumer oriented. The Central American Common Market has provided a stimulus for industry, and a large portion of the industrial production is exported to Common Market member countries.

Overall economic growth is adequate but did not meet the government's goals for the late 1960s. There are many obstacles to more rapid growth. Among the more important is a lack of infrastructure, particularly transportation facilities. The railroads are confined to the coastal area of the north and do not penetrate more than seventy-five miles inland. The mountainous topography forestalled rapid road construction and makes it more expensive than in many other countries. Many smaller communities are reached only by airplane.

Illiteracy, poor health and sanitation, and insufficient technical and administrative personnel are also contributory factors. A good manager or engineer finds himself engaged in unrelated activities, diminishing his effectiveness. The history of political instability has prevented the government from making long-term economic plans. Almost all government personnel change with each new government.

A lack of adequate statistics since the 1969 war prevented a determination of the exact economic costs and results of the conflict as well as of equally damaging flooding following a hurricane and heavy rains in the fall of 1969. The economic growth rate, however, was lower in 1969 than in previous years, and the production of some crops, particularly bananas, decreased. It was estimated that two years would elapse before all agricultural production reached the prewar level.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL SETTING

Much of the country's history has been shaped by geographic factors and foreign influence in domestic affairs. It is the most mountainous country in Central America, most of the land area lying more than 1,000 feet above sea level. The mountains, rising in haphazard fashion rather than in distinct ranges, have kept road and rail construction to a minimum from the colonial era to modern times. Interspersed among the peaks is a network of small, populated, arable valleys, most of them out of effective contact with major national centers (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions).

In the past, such lack of communication had two important political effects: it increased the tendency to focus attention on the capital city and, simultaneously, made it easy for political leaders to stage revolts in the countryside if they became dissatisfied with events in the capital. Such revolts have been a common feature of Honduran history. In fact, instability has been such that the Republic experienced more than ninety changes of power between 1840 and 1970 (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

An additional reason for this instability is that the territory did not achieve effective unification in the colonial period and was divided into separate administrative units from the 1570s onward. One of these was ruled from Tegucigalpa, and the other from Comayagua. After independence, disruptive rivalry between the two cities was a prominent feature of national life throughout most of the nineteenth century, and the site of the capital was regularly transferred from one to the other. It was only in 1880, after Tegucigalpa had completely outdistanced its rival, that it became the permanent capital (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

Such divisiveness encouraged neighboring countries to influence domestic political events. The most active was Guatemala, which exerted a powerful and at times predominant influence over Honduran politics until the mid-1880s. After that time, the center of outside influence shifted toward Nicaragua. It was only after the end of Nicaraguan strong man José Santos Zelaya's regime that independent-minded political leaders in Honduras could rule without facing revolts sponsored by neighboring states. The constant interference acted as a brake on national consolidation and contributed substantially to political unrest (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

Economic factors have also played an important role. Gold and silver were the main incentive for early Spanish expeditions into the region and provided the main source of national wealth throughout the colonial period and the nineteenth century. The location of most of these deposits toward the center of the country was largely responsible for making this region the dominant center of national life (see ch. 8, The Economy; ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

Toward the end of the nineteenth century coastal banana plantations operated by United States firms expanded rapidly, and their output eventually surpassed that of all mining activities combined. This spurred rapid economic growth along the long-neglected north coast and produced a large, quiescent coastal enclave dominated by the two major banana producers. Though they paid high wages and provided excellent fringe benefits, after World War II their dominant economic position made them increasingly vulnerable to charges of exploitation (see ch. 8, The Economy; ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics; ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions).

Despite such activity, the lot of the average Honduran has not changed greatly from independence to modern times. There has been some improvement of the nation's communications system; governmental services, such as public schools, are more widespread; and economic modernization has significantly altered local society in some areas. Yet most citizens have not yet been effectively incorporated into the political and economic life of the country; illiteracy is common, agriculture continues to be the major economic pursuit, and most farmers are still isolated peasants tending subsistence plots of maize (corn) and other traditional crops.

PRE-COLUMBIAN CIVILIZATION

Centuries before the arrival of the first Spaniards, the area of western Honduras harbored the Old Mayan Empire, one of the hemisphere's most advanced civilizations. This culture apparently arose toward the end of the fourth century A.D. and flourished until the eighth or ninth century. Among other things, its people charted the movements of the sun, moon, and planets, devised methods of writing, constructed elaborate religious centers, and traded over wide areas. Actually composed of semi-independent villages and religious centers, this so-called empire's major works were concentrated in an area near the modern village of Copán.

Around the time of Charlemagne, however, the more advanced parts of this culture forsook Honduras and shifted some 250 miles northward to Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. When the Spaniards arrived in the early sixteenth century, they found some relatively advanced Indians but scant trace of the Mayas' former glory. Jungles had long since covered over the major cities, and it was not until the nineteenth century that archaeologists began the slow process of restoration that has made the Copán region a major center for scholarly investigation and one of modern Honduras' foremost points of interest to foreign visitors.

The major Indian groups present when the Spaniards arrived showed features of four major cultures. In the western and central highlands, concentrated around the Comayagua and Ulúa valleys, lived tribes who were strongly influenced by the Maya and who traded extensively with remnants of Mayan culture to the north. Southern Honduras contained an enclave of peoples speaking Nahuatl (see Glossary) who owed their language and probably some of their cultural patterns to advanced civilizations from other parts of Mexico, while the tribes along Honduras' north coast had their roots in the Carib-Arawak culture that dominated the islands of the Caribbean Sea. To the east, centering on the valley of Olancho, were warlike tribes showing some characteristics of cultures influenced by the Chibcha civilization of northern Columbia (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

Compared to the Old Maya or Chibcha cultures, none of the Honduran tribal groupings were particularly advanced; most of their villages were only tenuously tied into federations owing loyalty to a regional chief. This lack of effective organization tended to prevent immediate resistance to the Spanish expeditions that roamed the territory in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.

DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST

Christopher Columbus discovered Honduras in 1502 during his fourth and final voyage, in the course of which he stopped at one of the small Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía) off the Atlantic coast and then crossed over to the mainland. The Spaniards made no attempt to occupy the area until the 1520s, however, after the conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés, the establishment of a permanent colony in Panama, and exploration by Gil González Dávila from Panama up to the Bay of Fonseca in 1522 and 1523.

In 1524 four competing expeditions set out to seize Honduras. One was led by González Dávila, who sailed from Spain with royal permission to take over the regions already explored; another, loyal to Pedro Arias de Avila (known popularly as Pedrarias), the governor of Panama, set out from Nicaragua. Hernán Cortés dispatched a third expedition from Mexico, but its leader renounced his authority, whereupon Cortés dispatched yet another party.

Ferocious fighting ensued between these four groups and prompted Cortés to personally lead a fifth expedition into Honduras in 1525. He arrived at what is now part of extreme northeastern Guatemala just in time to replenish the supplies of the few remaining Spaniards there; he then moved them to the mouth of the Ulúa River, site of the modern Honduran town of Puerto Cortés. Pushing on, Cortés found about forty more colonists at the only other settlement, that of Trujillo, on the northeast coast. His presence quelled most disputes and established a measure of peace among the Spaniards until his departure in 1526.

Honduras' first royal administrator, Diego López de Salcedo, was installed as governor of the territory in 1526. Although his leadership was uninspired, the mere presence of a royally appointed official helped maintain stability in the area. From this time on, rivalries were generally limited to territorial disputes between neighboring areas or conflicts between two or more persons claiming royal authority to govern. Such disputes occurred frequently but tended to produce involved legal controversies rather than the bloodshed of the first few years.

Meanwhile, Indian problems helped unite the Spanish colonists. The natives along the north coast had offered little opposition, but the more advanced and better organized tribes in the hinterlands were determined to resist subjugation. A Spanish attempt to establish permanent centers in the western highlands culminated in a major war from 1537 to 1539. This resistance was directed by a powerful young chieftain known to the Spaniards as Lempira, or "Lord of the Mountain." The colonists estimated that he dominated about 200 towns and commanded up to 30,000 warriors; his followers believed him to be invincible.

Lempira's uprising centered on a stronghold constructed by his forces about fifteen miles south of Gracias a Dios. Known as the Peñol de Cerquín, it proved impregnable to the Spaniards until they arranged for a truce to conduct negotiations. Instead of negotiating, however, they killed Lempira and launched a successful all-out attack on his stunned followers in the Peñol. The great fortress' fall was the turning point of the revolt, though fighting continued for several months.

Suppression of this revolt consolidated Spanish control over the area and paved the way for establishment of the *repartimiento* and *encomienda* systems throughout the interior. These Spanish institutions were used to obtain a work force for the colonists, who regarded themselves as an upper class and were generally unwilling to engage in routine manual labor. *Repartimiento*, a system of dividing up Indian groups and apportioning their members among individual Spaniards as slaves was employed in many parts of the New World. Though it caused severe hardship among Honduras' Indians in the first years of the Spanish conquest, the combined opposition of many local officials and the Spanish crown caused the use of *repartimiento* to decline after about 1530.

Instead, what predominated in most parts of Honduras was the *encomienda* system, which granted individual Spaniards the right to a certain amount of labor from Indians living on a given parcel of land. Such Spaniards were theoretically responsible for the well-being of their charges, but the system was widely abused.

Because of this treatment, diseases brought from the Old World, and extreme hardships associated with the rebellion of 1537 to 1539, the Indian population declined precipitously. Precise figures are not available, but there may have been as many as 500,000 Indians in the area when the Spaniards arrived. Robert Chamberlain in *The Conquest and Colonization of Honduras* suggests that this Indian population may have been reduced to 36,000 by 1547. This devastation seems all the more remarkable when account is taken of the tiny number of Spanish colonists involved. As of 1542 the total population of Honduras appears to have included less than 250 Spaniards.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Colonial Administration

Intense disputes over who had the right to govern the colony continued late into the sixteenth century. Most of the time the territory was supervised by an *audiencia* (Spanish court with executive and legislative as well as judicial functions), but the jurisdiction of the particular courts involved changed frequently. In 1542 the crown created the Audiencia de los Confines to administer an area made up of modern Panama, Central America, and parts of southern Mexico. This court was dissolved in 1548 and, for the next twenty-two years, control over Honduras passed between one court based in Guatemala, another in Panama, and two local governors in Honduras. Finally, in 1570, control was given to the court in Guatemala, which retained it for more than two centuries until independence from Spain was achieved in 1821. This court, ruling what was known as the Captaincy General, or "kingdom," of Guatemala, had jurisdiction over all the territory from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to Costa Rica.

The situation was complicated somewhat by the fact that Honduras was not a single administrative unit during much of the colonial period. For some time the coastal region called Honduras was considered distinct from the highlands, which were called Higueras, but one man or court generally held authority over both areas.

This distinction faded as the coastal settlements became less important, but another division soon emerged. Discovery of silver deposits near Tegucigalpa in 1578 caused that region, together with areas to the east, to be separated from the Gobierno (see Glossary) of Comayagua, which had administered most of what is now Honduras. The new administrative unit, known as the Alcaldía Mayor of Tegucigalpa, encompassed the present-day departments of Francisco Morazán, Valle, Choluteca, El Paraíso, and Gracias a Dios and parts of La Paz, Colón, and Olancho. The Gobierno of Comayagua thereby found itself hemmed in on the east, and on the west it encountered the Alcaldía Mayor of San Andrés de Nueva Zaragosa, which had authority over the present-day departments of Copán and Ocotopeque. The latter division was of relatively minor importance, but the separation of Tegucigalpa from Comayagua provided the basis for an intense rivalry between the two regions' capital cities that continued well into the nineteenth century.

International Conflicts

After the seat of effective governmental control shifted to Guatemala in 1570, power struggles within Honduras became less important. Gold and silver mining continued to be the area's major industry, especially in the interior. The coastal regions kept on declining in importance, showing no real signs of revival until the latter half of the nineteenth century (see ch. 8, The Economy).

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries pirate raiders posed serious problems for Central America. England, France, and the Netherlands were in no position to challenge Spain's colonial supremacy, but nothing prevented them from encouraging independent vessels to attack coastal settlements. The Honduran territories, with their exposed north coast invitingly near the Panamanian transshipment point for mineral wealth bound for Spain, received repeated attacks.

These pirate assaults posed sufficient danger for the Spanish authorities to begin instituting a convoy system and strengthening fortifications along the Atlantic coast, among them Puerto Caballos (Puerto Cortés) and Trujillo in Honduras. But metropolitan Spain's growing weakness encouraged additional incursions, and no major coastal settlement was left unscathed. Pirates took Puerto Caballos in 1602 and 1639; in 1660 they took it again and burned it down. Trujillo fell in 1639, and San Pedro fell in 1660, and sporadic raids along both coasts continued throughout the century. By 1700 British raiders had firmly established one major beachhead at Belice, northwest of Honduras, and the British government had assumed a quasi-protectorate over the Mosquito Indians living along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and eastern Honduras. The Bay Islands off Honduras' north shore also served as an English stronghold.

Throughout most of the eighteenth century a state of war existed between Spain and England, and the latter lost no time in turning its New World holdings against the Spanish colonists. During the first part of the century the British enjoyed considerable success in inciting Indians and Negro slaves to launch raids against Honduran towns in the interior (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups). British influence diminished toward the end of the century, however, and a majority of the Englishmen operating along the north coast of present-day Honduras were expelled from the area. They persisted in nearby regions, however, and did not abandon effective control of the east coast of Nicaragua and the Bay Islands until the latter half of the nineteenth century (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

Drift Toward Independence, 1800—21

There is little doubt that these wartime activities sharply increased the unity of the Spanish colonies of Central America and, in all likelihood, significantly strengthened their loyalty to Spain. As independence approached, neither Comayagua nor Tegucigalpa showed evidence of favoring separation from Spain. The two separate administrative units were consolidated in 1788; this unification proved unsatisfactory to both capital cities, however, and Tegucigalpa was again made a separate *alcaldía mayor* in 1812. Yet these changes as well as the mercurial shifts of Spanish power and policy growing out of the French Revolution, found most Hondurans willing to follow whatever doctrines were pronounced by the legitimate Spanish government of the day.

This loyalty typified most of Central America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There was no strong or well-organized current of opinion in favor of independence, although intellectuals had given consideration to such a possibility; uprisings broke out in Nicaragua and El Salvador in 1811 but were soon put down. The result was that Central American independence came not as a result of the area's own forceful initiative but rather as a side-effect of the successful Mexican independence movement led by Augustín de Iturbide. That revolutionary leader's forces marched into Mexico City on September 27, 1821, bringing independence with them and placing the ruling power in Iturbide's hands. Watching the Mexican movement's growing progress, top Central American leaders in Guatemala City had decided that their region's independence was both inevitable and desirable. They therefore met in the capital on September 15, 1821, and declared the "absolute independence" of Central America.

Union With Mexico, 1822—23

The signed Act of Independence reached the rival cities of Tegucigalpa and Comayagua shortly thereafter. Local officials had little option but to adapt as best they could to their newly independent status. Because of differences in the two capitals' relationship with the government in Guatemala, their reactions were different:

Tegucigalpa approved allegiance to Guatemala, but Comayagua decided to opt for Central American union with Mexico. The conflict was so sharp that the two regions came to the brink of civil war, and the matter was resolved only when the Central American government in Guatemala City proclaimed its annexation to Mexico in early 1822.

The Congress of Mexico, including elected representatives from Comayagua and Tegucigalpa, assembled in the middle of that year. José Cecilio del Valle of Honduras, the most important Central American representative, was elected vice president of the assembly. The congress did not complete its work on a proposed constitution, however, for Iturbide—now ruling as emperor of Mexico—dissolved it in order to contend with growing challenges to his power. Unable to quell the opposition, Iturbide abdicated in March 1823, ending the experimental union of Mexico and Central America.

THE UNITED PROVINCES OF CENTRAL AMERICA, 1824–38

Following Iturbide's fall, a constituent assembly met in Guatemala City in 1823 and declared the formal existence of "The United Provinces of Central America . . . free and independent of old Spain, of Mexico, and of every other power." Honduran representatives ratified the declaration; they also signed a federal constitution establishing a loosely organized government, headed by a federation president and a federal congress based in Guatemala City. Recognizing that strong central government would not be acceptable to outlying regions, the constitution's framers built in a high degree of local autonomy. Each of the subordinate provinces was to have a separate president and legislature, and the central government was to depend entirely on revenues collected for it by the provincial governments. A moderate conservative, Manuel José Arce, was elected president of the federation.

There was some disagreement over whether Honduras should enter the union as one state or two separate ones, but it was finally agreed to unite the region, alternating the capital between Comayagua and Tegucigalpa. A constituent assembly met in 1824 and elected a liberal, Dionisio de Herrera, as provisional president.

Throughout Central America differences soon arose between conservatives, favoring a large role for the church and strong central control, and liberals, who were pressing for greater provincial autonomy. Disputes also arose over financial support for the federal government and the degree of control it could rightfully exercise over the provinces.

As a focal point of liberal sentiment, the Honduran government soon found itself deeply embroiled in these controversies. The local legislature that met in Comayagua in 1826 divided along liberal-conservative lines, and the conservative faction demanded the removal of President Herrera. Differences between liberals and conservatives were aggravated by eruption of violence in some areas, and attempts to quell it pitched Honduras into the Central American Civil War of 1826–29. Conservative federal troops marched into Honduras in October 1826. The elected Honduran vice president, now on the side of the invading conservatives, led a force that captured Comayagua in 1827 but was ousted later that year by the Honduran liberal leader Francisco Morazán. Two years later Morazán's forces carried the battle to the federal capital, occupying Guatemala City and installing him as president of the federation.

Though Morazán retained control of the federation until it dissolved, the years of his administration were beset with unrest and civil war. Almost immediately upon assuming power, the new government promulgated and enforced numerous anticlerical laws. This intensified opposition in clerical and conservative circles and enhanced the incentives for revolt in outlying provinces.

Another discordant element grew out of the other provinces' distrust of the relatively rich and powerful province of Guatemala which, they feared, would be able to make federal authorities subservient to its will. Throughout Morazán's rule liberals and conservatives elsewhere were so divided and local jealousies so intense that the federal government could never be sure of the loyalty of any one state.

A conservative plot to seize control of the federal government was put into effect in 1831 and was foiled only after the rebels had taken the Honduran coastal towns of Omoa, just west of Puerto Cortés, and Trujillo and had precipitated the temporary secession of El Salvador from the federal union.

In an effort to free his government from its links to the Guatemalan aristocracy, Morazán moved his capital to San Salvador in 1834. By this time, however, the federation was already disintegrating. It had become extremely difficult to secure financial support from the provinces, and attempts to draft political reforms strengthening the federal government were unsuccessful. By 1837 the growing number and intensity of local revolts were becoming more than the federal forces could control. Major civil strife struck Guatemala in 1838, and disintegration of the government there was generally regarded as conclusive evidence that the central government had succumbed to chaos. Official newspapers stopped printing; mail service was completely disrupted; and Morazán, with his army in the field, was completely out of touch with federal officials in San Salvador. Given these conditions, Costa Rica called for a constitutional convention, and Nicaragua declared its independence; both asserted that no federal government existed. In May

1838 the federal congress decreed that each of the Central American states was free to establish its own form of government.

Honduras, then disrupted by a welter of internal disputes, declared its complete independence from the federation on October 26, 1838. In January 1839 the Constituent Assembly adopted the Republic's first constitution, and in 1840 a newly installed legislature chose as president the strong-willed and stauchly conservative Francisco Ferrera.

POSTINDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENTS

The Dream of Central American Unity

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Central American federation was the strong recurrent support for its revival, which led to formation of several short-lived unions with other states.

In 1842 Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador agreed to set up a new federation. A confederate government was established in 1844, but it never attained any significant power and dissolved within a year. Several decades later, in early 1885, the strong Guatemalan ruler Justo Rufino Barrios unilaterally decreed the union of Central America, assumed military command of all the states, and set out to combat resistance. The Honduran Congress officially approved his plan, but the attempt at union ended with the death of Barrios during a battle in El Salvador a few weeks thereafter. In 1895 Honduras signed a pact of union with Nicaragua and El Salvador, but a revolution in El Salvador prevented its implementation.

The last major effort to achieve political union began in 1917, when Honduras suggested that the question be discussed at a meeting of Central American diplomats in San José, Costa Rica. El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Guatemala backed the idea, but Nicaraguan hesitation resulted in its temporary rejection. Later, in 1921, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador signed a pact of union and installed a federal council and president. Costa Rica failed to ratify the agreement, and Guatemala was swept by internal disturbances; by early 1922 it was obvious that the pact had become unworkable.

Other programs aimed at various types of regional cooperation received considerable attention in the twentieth century. The first major agreement of this nature was the treaty signed by Honduras in 1907 setting up the Central American Court of Justice. Undoubtedly the most successful of these cooperative arrangements have been in the economic field. In 1951 the five Central American republics agreed to promote "gradual and progressive" integration of their national economies. By the mid-1960s the Central American Common Market, which had evolved from this agreement, had resulted in a free trade area and common external tariffs on most imported items. It also appeared to be producing fairly substantial economic benefits for Honduras. Despite serious threats to the organization at the close of the decade, there was little disagreement that it represented the most successful and stable regional arrangement since dissolution of the Central American federation in 1838.

Foreign Influence, 1838–1911

Until the twentieth century internal Honduran politics were dominated by frequent foreign interference and civil strife. Lacking any strong sense of national unity, the new country's political groups usually found themselves divided along lines of personal allegiance to particular leaders. These personalistic groups generally used either the liberal or conservative label, but those titles in many cases had little relation to the political philosophy of their adherents. Because party loyalties, as well as national loyalties, were not highly developed, there was little except the power, ability, and desire of top leaders to keep rivalries from erupting into violence. Periodic outbreaks, sometimes culminating in civil wars, were common (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

Central American Involvement

Of Honduras' neighbors, Guatemala usually played the most important role in domestic affairs. During most of the nineteenth century poor relations between various Guatemalan and Honduran presidents almost invariably precipitated the fall of the Honduran executive. Sometimes these changes were achieved peacefully, but in other cases they produced extended periods of violence.

Maintenance of good relations with whoever happened to occupy the Guatemalan presidency therefore became a major prerequisite for successful Honduran chiefs of state. Toward the end of the nineteenth century this dominant Guatemalan role began to fade, to be replaced for a time by the influence of Nicaragua; however, this influence soon declined also and, since the early twentieth century, these neighbors have exercised little direct control over selection of Honduran presidents (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

The first constitutional president of the Republic, Francisco Ferrera, quashed several local uprisings. Upon expiration of his term, Ferrera was appointed minister of war and chief of the armed forces and continued to rule the country from these posts until 1848.

Juan Lindo, selected as president by the Congress in 1847, continued in office after adoption of a new constitution in 1848. He was nearly toppled by a revolt stemming from a financial dispute with England and opposition from Guatemala and was forced to flee

Tegucigalpa in 1850. Assistance from Nicaragua and El Salvador helped him ultimately to put down the uprising and restore stability, but chaos returned when Lindo refused to accept a third term in office in 1852.

Lindo's successor, the liberal Trinidad Cabañas, was unacceptable to the conservative regime then in power in Guatemala, which attempted his overthrow by force. Although he was able to stand off the Guatemalan armies temporarily, they finally defeated him in 1855 and installed the conservative president Santos Guardiola. Guardiola ruled until assassinated in 1862 and was succeeded by a series of conservative chief executives. In all, during the ensuing decade the presidency changed hands over twenty times.

A liberal revolt that took control of Guatemala in 1871 had important repercussions in Honduras. Together with a sympathetic government in El Salvador, the liberal Guatemalan government forced out the conservative Honduran president José María Medina in 1872 and installed the liberal Céleo Arias as president.

A new Guatemalan president then decided to remove Arias and replace him with Ponciano Leiva. Arias, however, refused to resign, managed to have a new constitution adopted in 1873 that favored his political position, and resisted Leiva's invasion. Arias finally capitulated at Comayagua in 1874, however; the Constitution of 1865 was restored, and Leiva was installed as president.

Guatemalan strong man Justo Rufino Barrios, who controlled his country's government most of the time from 1871 to 1885, became dissatisfied with Leiva in 1875 and prompted former President Medina to lead a revolt against him. After a year of fighting, Medina had failed to eliminate Leiva, so the Guatemalan leader signed an agreement with El Salvador providing backing for a third contender, Marco Aurelio Soto. Though Medina eventually defeated Leiva, his obvious lack of Guatemalan backing caused him to resign the presidency in favor of Soto.

Soto, who ruled from 1876 to 1883, was probably the most popular nineteenth-century president. Working from a firm base of support both at home and in Guatemala, he increased his strength by refusing to persecute former enemies and demonstrated a tolerance of all political groups. His unusually strong position helped ensure the success of this lenient policy and permitted him to devote considerable attention to other tasks. His government accomplished more for the country than had most of its predecessors; it created a finance department to enact budgetary reforms, introduced secularized cemeteries and marriages, set up a system of free primary public education, organized the postal and telegraph services, created a mint and national library, and attempted to institutionalize the armed forces. In addition, a new constitution was drafted and approved in 1880. Soto resigned in 1883, after it had become evident that Guatemalan President Barrios wished him to step down.

General Luis Bográn, elected to succeed Soto in 1883, maintained relative calm in Honduras and kept on good terms with Barrios until the latter's death in 1885. Bográn himself died in office in 1890.

Former President Ponciano Leiva was then elected president in 1891, but the newly founded Liberal Party's candidate, Policarpo Bonilla, challenged the validity of the elections. Leiva's repression of the Liberals then fueled sporadic uprisings, which assumed an increasingly serious nature as time passed. Finally, in 1893, Leiva renounced the presidency. His two anti-Liberal successors were unable to put down the continuing Liberal revolts, however, and in 1894 Liberal forces aided by a large number of Nicaraguan troops overthrew the government.

The new president, Policarpo Bonilla, quickly convoked a constituent assembly, which confirmed his control and adopted a new constitution. His government, which lasted until 1899, is generally credited with being one of the more productive of the nineteenth century. Like Soto before him, Bonilla depended heavily on foreign support, but he did manage to impose several years of peace and to enact a series of administrative reforms. Probably his best-known actions were revision of the civil, commercial, mining, penal, and military codes and signature of a pact uniting Honduras with Nicaragua and El Salvador in June of 1895. A Salvadorean revolt against the federal authorities led to dissolution of the union in 1898.

In 1899 General Terencio Sierra was elected president. Toward the end of his term in office Sierra launched an unsuccesful campaign to succeed himself. The result was a disputed election that ended with the largest votegetter, General Manuel Bonilla, marching with his adherents on Tegucigalpa in 1903. Shortly after the fall of the capital, Congress declared him president.

Manuel Bonilla's administration began with strong popular and military support. He revised the civil, military, and penal codes; attempted to obtain reduction of debts stemming from European interoceanic railway loans extended to Honduras in 1867, 1869, and 1870; and succeeded in making a slight improvement in the rudimentary road system. He also convoked a constituent assembly, which put a new constitution into effect in 1906. Bonilla's downfall resulted from his inability to simultaneously maintain good relations with both the Guatemalan government and the powerful Nicaraguan regime of José Santos Zelaya, who exercised control of that country from 1893 until 1909.

Guatemala launched a monthlong invasion of Honduras in 1906; later that year Honduras entered into a treaty of peace and friendship with El Salvador and Guatemala that pointedly omitted Nicaragua. Subsequently, the Nicaraguan army invaded Honduras and early in 1907 assisted local opposition leaders in forcing Bonilla from the presidency.

The victorious opposition installed as president General Miguel R. Dávila, who called a constituent assembly that reinstated the 1894 Constitution. For several years he held out against a series of revolts, the most important of which were directed by former President Manuel Bonilla. By early 1911, however, Bonilla had taken the Bay Islands, Trujillo, and La Ceiba. Rather than undergo a direct confrontation, the two men accepted a United States offer of mediation, and their representatives met aboard the U.S.S. *Tacoma* at Puerto Cortés. They agreed upon the resignation of President Dávila, the appointment of Francisco Bertrand as provisional president, and the scheduling of presidential elections in the near future. These events signaled the end of Nicaraguan predominance in Honduran internal affairs, which came as a consequence of the end of the Zelaya regime; the gradually increasing national cohesiveness of Honduras; and a substantial rise in United States willingness to mediate Central American disputes.

British and United States Involvement

Though the threat of war with Great Britain shrank after Central American became independent, that country continued to play a prime role in the region for most of the nineteenth century. At the dawn of independence in 1821, British subjects occupied strong positions in Belice, the Bay Islands of Honduras, and the Mosquito Coast shared by Honduras and Nicaragua. Shortly thereafter the glaring weakness of Central America encouraged the government of Great Britain to formally claim Belice as the crown colony of British Honduras, to occupy the Bay Islands, and to extend and strengthen the hold upon the Mosquito Coast. The English also came to dominate trade with the United Provinces of Central America and later with its independent component states. Yet there was never any treaty with the Central American republic, nor did Great Britain recognize or establish diplomatic relations with any of the independent states. Initiatives by the federation and, later, by independent Honduras aimed at getting Great Britain to relinquish its holdings met with no success.

During the 1830s and 1840s competing British mahogany companies resurrected territorial claims of the Mosquito Indians living along the Caribbean coasts of Nicaragua and eastern Honduras, over whom the British had once assumed a quasi-protectorate. A gradual tightening of British control in that area culminated in 1848 with English seizure of the Nicaraguan town of San Juan del Norte and its prompt rechristening as Greytown—all in the name of the Mosquito "king." These events, coming just when the United States was showing interest in the possibility of an interoceanic canal through the region, appeared as a direct challenge to that power. Consequently, United States interest in the issue led to a series of British-United States negotiations that produced the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850. Honduran financial problems and intense nationalistic fervor on the part of local British and United States consular officials led to temporary British seizure of Tigre Island in the Gulf of Fonseca in 1849, but this act did not prevent conclusion of the treaty.

The Clayton-Bulwer pact marked the beginning of the end for most British colonial aspirations in Central America. Though open to interpretation, the treaty stipulated that neither the United States nor Great Britain would "occupy, or fortify, or assume, or exercise, any domain over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito Coast, or any part of Central America." The British subsequently withdrew from Greytown. In 1852 attention was redirected to the treaty when the British proclaimed the Bay Islands to be a British colony. Subsequently, the United States joined Honduras in protesting the takeover as a violation of the Clayton-Bulwer pact. In 1859 Honduras and Great Britain negotiated the Wyke-Cruz Treaty at Comayagua, by which Great Britain gave up all claims to the Bay Islands. Shortly thereafter the English abandoned most of the Mosquito claims, although they did not completely relinquish their Mosquito protectorate until thirty years later.

The decline in Great Britain's role was matched by an upsurge of United States influence. Much of this was demonstrated by the activities of private United States citizens, such as Ephriam George Squier, former United States chargé d'affaires to Central America, who promoted what later turned out to be an ill-conceived scheme to construct an interoceanic railway across Honduras. In 1853 the Honduran Congress granted Squier's company an exclusive right to construct the line, and two so-called loans of US$20,000 each were extended to the Honduran government that went to buy arms for fighting invading forces from Guatemala. There were also strong indications that some Honduran leaders wanted to investigate the possibility of getting their nation annexed to the United States. Despite the notable side effects of his original plan, however, Squier's company failed without laying any track.

Trying to revive the project, the Honduran government later negotiated several major British and French loans that produced a large debt burdening the country well into the twentieth century. In 1871 some fifty-seven miles of track were finally laid between the Atlantic coast and San Pedro Sula, but it quickly fell into disrepair and was abandoned.

The exploits of the American filibusterer William Walker were even more spectacular, although most of them had little direct impact on Honduras. After participating with a band of men in one of Nicaragua's civil wars, Walker made himself president of that republic in 1856. The other Central American states, including Honduras, took up arms against him, and Walker was forced to leave Nicaragua. He returned to Central America shortly thereafter with another expedition and attempted to take over Honduras' chief bay island, Roatán, only to be rebuffed by the British, who were still present despite formal cession of the island to Honduras the year before. He then attempted to take the town of Trujillo but was defeated, captured, and executed by the Honduran defenders. Walker's spectacular defeat and the American Civil War put an end to the immediate danger of United States nationals attempting to seize political control of the young Republic.

On the other hand, from the mid-nineteenth century private United States-owned corporations have played an increasingly large role in the nation's economic life. Such firms first shared in the mining activities that dominated the economy until the beginning of the twentieth century. When mining output declined, economic leadership eventually fell to a group of United States companies operating banana plantations along the tropical north coast.

In 1948 the banana companies started to become a focal point for pent-up public discontent. A long controversy with the largest corporation precipitated the country's first general labor strike in 1954. Thereafter the companies faced increased labor demands and governmental restrictions that for a while made it uncertain whether they could continue operating. This pressure abated in the early 1960s, but periodic labor unrest was evident up to the end of the decade.

Modern Honduran Government, 1911—70

Elections held in 1911 under provisional President Bertrand's supervision resulted in a popular selection of Manuel Bonilla as president and Bertrand as vice president. Bonilla died in 1913 and was succeeded by Bertrand, who resigned in 1915 in order to run in the elections scheduled for that year. He won and ruled until 1919, when it became clear that he did not intend to relinquish control of the presidency. A revolt then caused Bertrand to hand over power to a Council of Ministers and flee the country.

Elections held thereafter were won by General Rafael López Gutiérrez, who ruled until 1923. The López government encountered considerable unrest, including four separate uprisings in 1920, and maintenance of political control absorbed much of his attention. He survived until the elections of 1923, but extensive civil strife erupted out of that year's elections, in which none of the presidential candidates received a majority of the votes.

The man who obtained the most votes in that election, General

Tiburcio Carías Andino, was to dominate Honduran politics for nearly a quarter of a century. Carías's party, the National Party, had emerged in 1923 as a closely knit organization with widespread public support. Carías probably could have taken power after receiving a plurality of the votes, but a cardinal point of his campaign had been renunciation of force and he apparently believed the wisest political move was to wait.

Widespread fighting broke out after the Congress failed to select a new president, and the United States persuaded the contending factions to meet and settle their differences. This meeting, held on board the U.S.S. *Milwaukee* at Amapala, resulted in the Pact of Amapala, an agreement calling for installation of a provisional president and elections a few weeks thereafter. A few days later troops led by General Carías entered Tegucigalpa, and his former running mate, Miguel Paz Baraona, won the subsequent elections.

Paz quickly outlined a program containing most of the reforms called for by Carías and the National Party. These included road improvement, creation of an agricultural school, educational reorganization, improvement of the nation's credit standing, and easing of immigration restrictions. The policies of the Paz government also mirrored the desire of Carías to deemphasize partisan rivalries and adhere to democratic styles of conduct. Accordingly, Paz declared an amnesty for all persons engaged in revolutionary activity during the period preceding his accession to power and provided for repatriation of exiled Hondurans. The new president also inaugurated a plan previously agreed upon in 1923 to liquidate payment of debts still outstanding on the British interoceanic railway loans dating from the preceding century. A few minor uprisings occurred in 1926, but in general the Paz government was one of relative harmony and material progress.

In line with the president's repeated promises, relatively free elections were held in 1927. The two major contestants were Vicente Mejía Colindres, candidate of the United Liberal Party, and General Carías, the National Party nominee. Surprisingly, Mejía won the elections, Carías drew up a pact of conciliation with him, and Mejía ruled the country through 1932. Aside from a few disturbances on the Nicaraguan frontier, little significant violence marred Mejía's government, which concluded with a clear victory in the 1932 elections for General Carías.

The general's long-awaited victory prompted a major uprising, which was put down with some difficulty during the first few months of his administration. Despite this provocation, he continued to obtain supporters and discourage violence by exercising a degree of political tolerance. After the revolts of 1932 and again after minor uprisings in 1935 and 1936, Carías offered free air transportation back to Honduras for all political exiles provided they promised not to promote antigovernment disturbances. Yet he did not hesitate to stifle vocal opponents or to hinder opposition activity. During much of his administration some 300 prisoners, including some convicted of political offenses, were visibly engaged about the capital in public works projects while chained to large iron balls.

Toward the end of his elected term, a movement was launched to promote drafting of a new constitution and extension of the president's tenure. These actions, completed in 1936, allowed Carías to retain his legal hold on the presidency until 1943. Subsequent amendment of a key provision in this constitution permitted him to further extend his rule through 1948. Carías took full advantage of this amendment, stepping down only after election of a pro-National Party president, Juan Manuel Gálvez, in 1948.

Politically the long period dominated by Carías was unlike any other in Honduran history. An absence of significant revolts accompanying extension of his term of office provides a measure of the man's absolute control. With enforced internal stability and an unusual degree of security against external threats, the nation made some economic progress but few really substantial gains (see ch. 8, The Economy).

The Gálvez administration that succeeded Carías exercised some political independence, but an atmosphere of peace, security, and slow economic progress continued to prevail. A deadlock arose during the election of the successor to Gálvez, however, and his vice president, Julio Lozano, seized control of the government. After two years Lozano was forcibly removed through a military coup, which paved the way for election of a constituent assembly and promulgation of a new constitution in 1957. The assembly chose Ramón Villeda Morales as president, and he ruled until ousted by another coup within a few days of the end of his term in 1963.

The turbulence of Villeda Morales' government was matched by irregularities in the presidential successions of 1957 and 1963. Uprisings were frequent, conflicts with foreign-owned enterprises continued, border disputes with Nicaragua and Guatemala again became important, and small Communist groups began making significant attacks on the government. Apparently fearing military disloyalty, Villeda Morales detached the police from the armed forces in 1959 and turned them into the independent Civil Guard (see ch. 9, Armed Forces and Internal Security). By 1962 it was widely believed that this force, consisting of about 2,500 men, had been transformed into a political force loyal to the president's Liberal Party. For reasons that are still unclear, however, Villeda Morales permitted disarming of the Civil Guard shortly before presidential elections scheduled for October 1963. Adoption of an antimilitary stance by the leading contender, Modesto Rodas

Alvarado, had stimulated widespread rumors of a coup, which materialized ten days before the elections.

The coup leaders quickly put down all resistance and installed their chief, Air Force Colonel Osvaldo López Arellano, as president of the Republic. López reversed most of Villeda Morales' liberal economic policies and forcefully restored both political order and a degree of financial stability. In 1965 elections were held to select a constitutent assembly, which in turn drafted a new constitution and proclaimed López constitutional president, thereby extending his term to June 1971.

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND LIVING CONDITIONS

The country is the second largest Central American republic, having an area of 43,277 square miles. It stretches latitudinally from the Guatemalan border on the west to the Segovia River (also known as the Coco or the Wanks River) on the east, which separates it from Nicaragua. It is mountainous but has lowland areas along both coasts and within the eastern department of Gracias a Dios (see fig. 1).

Climate varies considerably between lowland and highland areas, both of which experience a wet and dry season common to all of Central America. The hot tropical climate of the north coast repelled settlers until the twentieth century, when banana plantations emerged to make it the country's densest population and commercial center. Historically, most of the people had settled in the western and southwestern intermontane basins, which parallel the mountains and where mineral wealth and fertile river valleys are abundant.

Particularly attractive to settlers has been the deep, flat basin that winds between the mountains from the plains around San Pedro Sula to the Gulf of Fonseca. This relatively flat trail is also the site of the country's major interoceanic road system.

Most of the population lives in rural towns and villages in the highland basins; some, however, have settled in urban areas that have grown up along the interocean basin. The majority of dwellings are small, mainly constructed by their owners and consisting of only one room, which combines cooking and living quarters. They are typically occupied by one family, whose wealth can be adjudged by the number of rooms in the house.

Because the majority of the people have settled in rural areas, the health and sanitation facilities available in the cities have not reached them. Most rural homes are without indoor toilets or water facilities, as well as electricity. Lack of accessibility to rural hamlets and isolated farmsteads has stymied the dispersion of medicines and medical personnel, but villagers with some so-called medical knowledge are common in all small communities.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Over 80 percent of the land is mountainous, thereby limiting the area suitable for cultivation and pastures. Much of the small amount of cultivated area is located in the flatlands, lofty plateaus, and river valleys that are between, and parallel to, the mountains. These temperate valleys and flatlands are also the primary areas of settlement except for the north coast banana district, which was retrieved from tropical forests in the twentieth century.

Both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts have tropical climates, and the coastlands are called hot lands (*tierra caliente*) after their climate. The distance to which these tropical lands extend into the interior is less on the Pacific side, where the mountains are closer to the shore. Inland, the mountains also serve to block the penetration of moisture-laden winds from the coasts into the interior.

Topography

Two distinct series of mountain ranges divide the country roughly into two halves, the north and the south. In the north, mountain ranges extend from the Guatemala border on the west to the Plátano River on the east (see fig. 2). These northern ranges are all extensions of the Central American Cordillera, a mountain chain that traverses Central America from Mexico to Nicaragua.

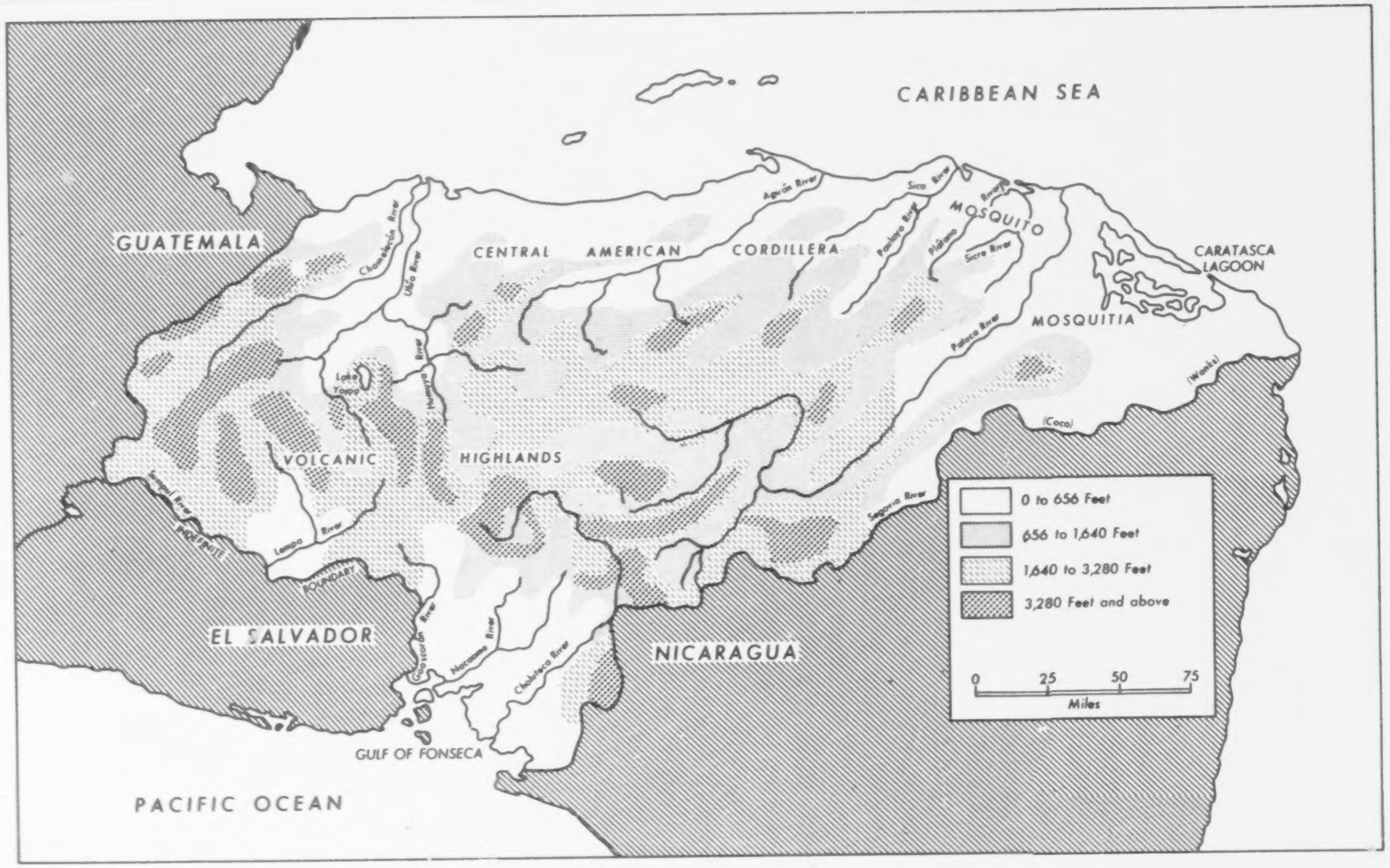
The southern half of the country is elevated by a series of mountain ranges called the Volcanic Highlands, which extend from the border with El Salvador in the southwest and across the southern part of the country to the border with Nicaragua in the east.

Mountain chains of the Central American Cordillera trend east-northeast and west-southwest. They run largely parallel to the coast and to each other. Offshore, northeast of La Ceiba on the north coast, one extension of these ranges forms the island department of the country, the Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía).

The northern mountain ranges were formed by changes in the earth's surface several million years ago. Underneath the surface cover of limestone and sandstone, the mountains are composed of granite, mica, slate, and other materials. Some limestone and sandstone fragments have eroded from the mountain slopes to form the soil materials of the northern valleys that run between the ranges.

The Volcanic Highlands in the southern half of the country have no recognizable trend. Unlike the mountains of the north, these southern ranges are newer, consisting of lava formed by volcanic eruption some 12 million years ago. Volcanic material has both eroded and been ejected from these highlands and forms the fertile soil on which the agricultural industries of the south in Choluteca Department thrive. The last volcanic eruption occurred in 1854.

The southern Volcanic Highlands are, overall, higher than the


CARIBBEAN SEA
GUATEMALA
CENTRAL AMERICAN CORDILLERA
Chamelecón River
Ulúa River
Aguán River
Sico River
Paulaya River
Plátano
Sicre River
River
MOSQUITO
CARATASCA LAGOON
MOSQUITIA
Patuca River
(Wanks)
(Coco)
Lake Yojoa
Humuya River
VOLCANIC
HIGHLANDS
Sumpul River
INDEFINITE BOUNDARY
Lempa River
Goascorán River
Nacaome River
Choluteca River
Segovia River
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
GULF OF FONSECA
PACIFIC OCEAN
0 to 656 Feet
656 to 1,640 Feet
1,640 to 3,280 Feet
3,280 Feet and above
0
25
50
75
Miles

Source: Adapted from Pan American Union, Department of Social Affairs, *Housing in Honduras*, Washington, 1964 p. 5.

Figure 2. Major Topographical Features of Honduras

northern Central American Cordillera chains. Of the two highest peaks in the country, one is found in the mountain chain bordering the western side of Lake Yojoa and is 9,300 feet above sea level. The other is southwest of Gracias, the capital of Lempira Department, and is 9,400 feet high.

In the areas between one mountain range and the other, in both the Central American Cordillera ranges and the Volcanic Highlands, are plateaus, river valleys, and savannas. These constitute the only arable level land in the country except for the north coast areas, which are planted in bananas.

These intermontane flatlands average two to seven miles in width and are flanked by mountains usually 3,000 to 7,000 feet in height. In the northern half of the country they are found interspersed between mountain ranges from the western border with Guatemala to the Plátano River, where the northern mountains terminate. In the south the flatlands are interspersed between the volcanic ranges from El Salvador in the west to the Segovia River in the east.

Historically, these level lands have been the most highly populated regions. Two examples are the river valley of the Ulúa, where San Pedro Sula is located, and the Aguán river valley around Trujillo. A series of valleys at various elevations, drained by the Ulúa and its tributary, the Humuya, in the north and the Nacaome and Choluteca in the south, extends the entire north-south distance of the country. It was by traveling along these linked valleys that Spanish settlers were able to found San Pedro Sula, Comayagua, Tegucigalpa, and other urban centers in the sixteenth century.

Tropical lowland areas are found on both coasts and in the far eastern Gracias a Dios Department. Between Guatemala and Nicaragua, the north coast extends over 450 miles, and the lowlands run some 75 miles inland to the downward slopes of the northern mountains. The south coast is much shorter, about 90 miles in all, and the lowlands extend about 25 miles inland.

Unlike the north coast mountains that gradually merge into the coastline, the Pacific Volcanic Highlands drop quickly to the sea, pinching out the south coast and bringing cooler temperatures to lower elevations than those in the north. The farther away from the mountains, however, the more tropical foliage and inclement weather have made the coastal plains unattractive to settlers.

Eastern Gracias a Dios Department is a wide extension of the northern coastline with similar topographical features. Nearest the coast it is swampy and overgrown with mangrove forests. Only on the largest lagoon, Caratasca, has any important commercial port developed—Puerto Lempira. Farther inland, great stands of Caribbean pines cover large portions of land.

Except for the banana plantations, more settlement has taken place in Gracias a Dios Department along the Segovia River than on the coasts. Much of the settlement devolved from the dispersion of indigenous tribes that had traditionally lived in the area and from the demarcation of the border with Nicaragua in the 1960s. At that time those local inhabitants who chose Honduran nationality moved to that country's side of the riverbanks.

There are many large river systems that drain the country and whose alluvial deposits have contributed to the fertility of the soil. In the north, from west to east, are the Chamelecón, the Ulúa, the Aguan, the Sico, the Paulaya, the Plátano, the Sicre, the Patuca, and the Segovia rivers. All the rivers in the north flow into the Caribbean Sea. The Ulúa and its tributaries drain one-third of the country.

In the south, from west to east, are the Lempa and Sumpul rivers, which run nearly the entire length of El Salvador's northern border with Honduras; the Goascorán, which marks El Salvador's eastern border with the country; the Nacaome, which arises north of Nacaome (capital of Valle Department) and runs south through Nacaome into the Gulf of Fonseca; and the Choluteca, which drains the area around Tegucigalpa and proceeds irregularly south through Choluteca (capital of Choluteca Department), and runs into the Gulf of Fonseca. All the rivers that arise in the south flow toward the Pacific Ocean.

Climate

Both mountain and coastal areas experience a wet season from mid-April to October and a dry season from November to April. The entire country also experiences high annual temperatures and heavy precipitation. These climatic features, however, are more extreme in the coastal areas and eastern Gracias a Dios Department, which are tropical, than in elevated areas, mountains, and intermontane valleys, which are temperate.

On the north coast and in Gracias a Dios Department, the tropical climate extends from sea level to 2,000 feet up the adjacent mountain slopes. Mean annual temperatures lie between 79°F. and 82°F. Daytime temperatures are between 85°F. and 90°F., but nights are cooler, between 70°F. and 75°F. Occasionally the heat is tempered by October to April winds called northerners. During the rainy season the temperature may drop 10 degrees moments before a downpour. The northern coastal areas and adjacent mountain slopes receive between 70 and 100 inches of rain annually.

The Pacific coastal plains also have a tropical climate, but it extends only to an elevation of 1,500 feet, owing to the steeper incline of the mountains. Because the wind comes from the north, the southern coastal areas and adjacent mountain slopes also receive less rain. The total amount of rainfall per year is between 60 and 80 inches, and most of this falls during the rainy season.

Because most of the land lies between 2,500 and 7,000 feet above sea level, much of the country's climate is temperate. The mean annual temperature for the mountains and intermontane basins lying within these altitudes is between 67°F. and 74°F. In the daytime it is usually between 75°F. and 80°F., but the temperature may climb as high as 90°F. in April or May.

The country is usually out of the direct path of hurricanes. Infrequently, however, from July to November, hurricane winds reach the north coast, causing damage to banana plantations and to flimsily built housing, which is common to the area. One such hurricane, Hurricane Francelia, caused much damage and flooding in 1969.

Natural Resources

It was because of the country's wide range of natural resources that Spanish settlers were first attracted to the interior. The discovery of mineral resources led to the founding of such important centers as Tegucigalpa. Some of the country's natural resources have dwindled with changes in land-management, but others, such as the pine forests, have yet to be exploited. In addition, in the late 1960s, some concessions had been given to oil companies for offshore explorations.

Soils and Minerals

Mildly acid sandy loam soils that are interspersed with pebbles form the soils' top horizon, but a large clay content emerges at greater depths. In older, deeper soils, clay is generally reached within a foot from the surface. Some soils, particularly those on the overworked grassy savannas, are low in nutrients, such as phosphate, whereas those under some types of palms and in alluvial deposits show an especially high abundance of nutrients. In lava areas, which extend through the south and which have been important to the coffee zone around Choluteca, the soils are thin. In the highlands, soils are also thin, but trees are able to grow on them amidst the granite boulders that form the mountain base.

The country is richly endowed in metal resources, including cadmium, gold, lead, silver, zinc, and iron ore. In 1967 the value of silver mined was estimated at the equivalent of US$15 million (see ch. 8, The Economy).

There are also a number of nonmetals—marble, gypsum, limestone, and salt. Marble sites are being quarried by an Italian company located in San Pedro Sula. Developments in the field of metals and nonmetals as of 1970 included: the discovery of potentially rich copper and lead deposits in Santa Bárbara Department; a new gold and silver mine, Mina Moramulca, in the extreme northwest of Choluteca Department; and offshore explorations for oil along the length of the north coast from Puerto Cortés to Cabo, Gracias a Dios, the farthest eastern point of the country.

Flora and Fauna

About 45 percent of the country is covered with forests. In the eastern part of the country swamps and lagoons are ringed with mangrove and palm forests, and farther inland there are pine forests. In the lower mountains and valleys toward the north coast, extensive broadleaf forests—including mahogany, Spanish cedar, balsa, rosewood, and other species—are found.

The western highlands are set in pine forests, their valleys being in dry deciduous woodlands. The Pacific plains and mountain slopes have a tropical forest pattern, and mangroves surround the swampy areas. Aside from the luxuriant tropical undergrowth common to the tropics, intermontane savannas often have thorny trees, cacti, and scrub bush associated with them.

In the intermontane valleys and savannas there are a number of species of trees that are important to the living patterns of the people. Gourds are used for containers and utensils, and drinks are made from the fruit and sap of trees.

Nance, a tree found on the Mosquito coastline in association with pine, produces a fruit that is sold on the streets in lowland villages. The juice of the fruit can be made into a soft drink or fermented into an intoxicant. Other trees that produce edible fruits are the jagua, found in Yoro and Olancho departments; the negrito, or aceituna, and the pinquín, or piñuela, which produces a fruit similar to a pineapple. The sap of the coyal palm, common in Olancho Department, can be fermented into a strong intoxicant, and the corozo palm of the Aguán River valley produces edible nuts, thatch for roofing, and fruit for winemaking.

All stands of pine are suitable for lumbering, but lack of transportation facilities has made their exploitation unfeasible at higher altitudes. The slow-burning ocote pine makes a useful torch for home lighting, and the resins and branches of the caribbean pine are used for kindling.

Honduras is frequently advertised as a paradise for hunters and fishermen, owing to the wide variety of fauna indigenous to the area. The anteater, armadillo, coyote, deer, fox, jaguar, monkey, peccary, gopher, porcupine, puma, and tapir can all be found within the national boundaries. Salt and fresh water fish and turtles abound in the lakes and offshore waters, and a commercial shrimp industry has been founded on the Bay Islands.

Birds include black robins, hummingbirds, macaws, nightingales, partridge, thrush, quail, and wrens. Reptiles range from the edible iguana to such dangerous species as the bushmaster, coral snakes, rattlesnakes, and crocodiles.

Transportation

The lack of adequate transportation has hindered the exploitation of natural resources, distribution of goods, and interregional trading. It has also militated against the natural development of communities and left pockets of settlers isolated from the rest of the republic. In outlying areas and elsewhere during the rainy season when some roads are flooded, mules are still widely used for transport.

At the time of the last census in 1961, the country had a little more than 2,000 miles of road, 10 percent of which were paved. Most roads had evolved from mule trails leading from the capital to the north coast commercial centers or from the capital west to areas on the trade route to El Salvador. These roads were impassable for extended periods of time.

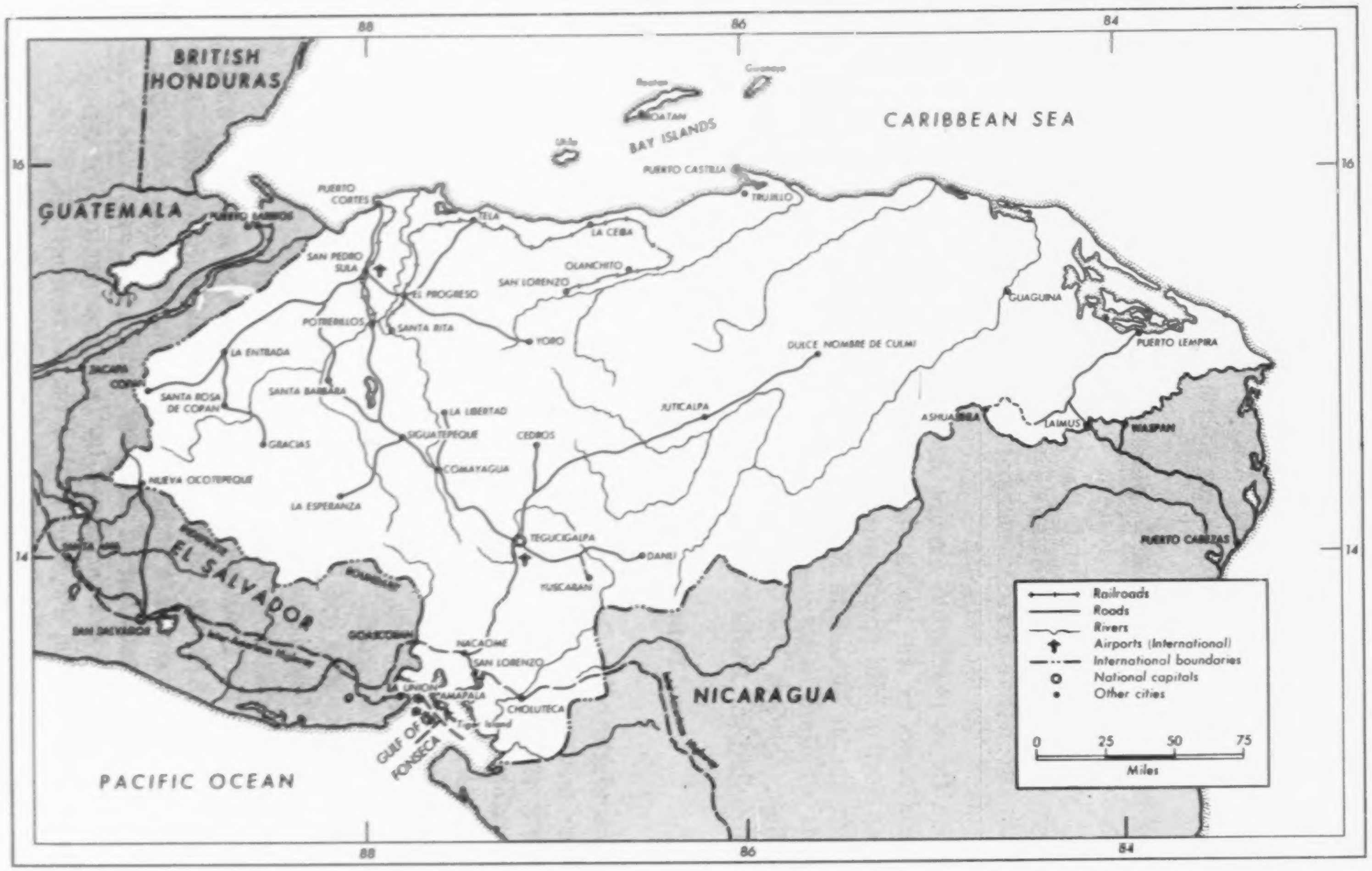
In the 1960s the chief highway systems were the Inter-American Highway, which runs through the extreme south from Goascorán to Choluteca and into Nicaragua, and the Interoceanic Highway, which connects Tegucigalpa with towns to the east as far as Danlí, with the northeast as far as Dulce Nombre de Culmí, with the north through Comayagua to Puerto Cortés, and with the west to Nueva Ocotepeque (see fig. 3).

Not all of these so-called highways were completely paved by 1970. In late 1967, however, two United States companies and one Israeli company had contracted with the government to complete the Tegucigalpa-San Pedro Sula highway, and a Peruvian firm had nearly finished paving the stretch from Comayagua south to the capital.

In addition, a public works project was begun in 1969 to improve the San Pedro Sula-El Progreso-Tela route, and a local company began the extension from Tela east to another major port, La Ceiba. A Venezuelan firm contracted with the government to build two sections of road in the west between La Entrada in the northwest and the Salvadorean border.

Because of the mountainous nature of the country, the airplane has been an important segment of the transportation system (see ch. 8, The Economy). Improvised airfields are a common sight in the east. The chief area served by air service is the banana coast, along which airports are located in Trujillo, La Ceiba, Tela, the San Pedro Sula area, and El Progreso.

Elsewhere flights originate from Comayagua and Tegucigalpa, located in the center of the country, and as far west as Copán near the Guatemalan border and as far east as Puerto Lempira in Gracias


BRITISH HONDURAS
GUATEMALA
CARIBBEAN SEA
BAY ISLANDS
Roatan
Guanaja
Utila
PUERTO CASTILLA
TRUJILLO
PUERTO CORTES
PUERTO BARRIOS
TELA
LA CEIBA
SAN PEDRO SULA
OLANCHITO
SAN LORENZO
EL PROGRESO
POTRERILLOS
SANTA RITA
YORO
LA ENTRADA
ZACAPA
COPAN
SANTA ROSA DE COPAN
SANTA BARBARA
LA LIBERTAD
SIGUATEPEQUE
CEDROS
GRACIAS
COMAYAGUA
NUEVA OCOTEPEQUE
LA ESPERANZA
TEGUCIGALPA
DANLI
YUSCARAN
JUTICALPA
DULCE NOMBRE DE CULMI
GUAGUINA
PUERTO LEMPIRA
ASHUAPRA
LAIMUS
WASPAN
PUERTO CABEZAS
EL SALVADOR
SAN SALVADOR
NACAOME
SAN LORENZO
LA UNION
AMAPALA
CHOLUTECA
Tiger Island
GULF OF FONSECA
PACIFIC OCEAN
NICARAGUA
Railroads
Roads
Rivers
Airports (International)
International boundaries
National capitals
Other cities
0
25
50
75
Miles
88
86
84
16
14

Source: Adapted from Pan American Union, Department of Social Affairs, *Housing in Honduras*, Washington, 1964, p. 5.

Figure 3. Transportation in Honduras

a Dios Department. Air service also connects the capital with the major agricultural and shipping centers in the south, Amapala and Choluteca.

The nearly 100 airfields that serve the country carry both freight and passengers. Airports near Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula handle international flights through both foreign and two domestically owned airlines. The Honduran companies are Honduras National Air Transport (Transportes Aéreos Nacionales de Honduras—TAN) and Air Service of Honduras (Servicio Aéreo de Honduras—SAH).

The rail system is owned and operated by the banana companies and the government. The rail system, with about 650 miles of track, is located entirely on the north coast and provides both passenger and freight services. The railways connect the banana plantations with ports and the major commercial center of the area, San Pedro Sula (see ch. 8, The Economy).

River traffic is negligible except as a means to reach the fertile agricultural areas in the north along the Ulúa and Aguán and their tributaries and in the south along the Choluteca. Other river systems, such as the 300-mile Segovia, are navigable for as much as two-thirds of their distance. At least one international merchant marine fleet services the country, a joint Guatemalan-Honduran operation called the Flota Mercante Gran Centroamericana.

International Boundaries

The boundaries with Guatemala on the west and Nicaragua on the east were both settled by arbitration. The 159-mile Guatemalan border was established in 1933 after a dispute over oil concessions. The boundary with El Salvador on the south is largely undefined. On the north the country is bordered by the Caribbean Sea. The eastern segment of the 400-mile Caribbean coastline is frequently called the Mosquito Coast, after indigenous tribes of the same name in the area. The Mosquito Coast and lowlands (called the Mosquitia), which lie between the Patuca River and the Segovia River, an area of some 10,000 square miles, had been the subject of rival claims by Honduras and Nicaragua in the late 1860s.

Repeated efforts to settle the matter were unsuccessful until 1906, when King Alfonso XIII of Spain, as arbiter, awarded the disputed area to Honduras. Further trouble over the area developed in the late 1950s, resulting in military action between the two countries. A cease-fire was arranged by the Organization of American States, and the dispute was settled on November 19, 1960, in favor of Honduras by the International Court of Justice. Further incidents that resulted from attempts to resettle citizens of both countries along unmarked portions of the border were resolved by the Inter- American Peace Committee.

Northern offshore territories include the Bay Islands—Roatán (site of the capital), Guanaja, and Utila—which form one of the eighteen national departments. These had been occupied by Great Britain in the 1740s and 1790s and made into a British colony in 1852. England also occupied lands along the Mosquito Coast, but these and the Bay Islands were rescinded to the Republic in 1859. The Bay Islands are about forty miles offshore and represent a distinct cultural entity, although recently attempts have been made to bring the predominantly English-speaking Protestant islanders into the national life.

Farther offshore and subject to diplomatic negotiations with the United States as of 1970 are the Swan Islands, which, for administrative purposes, are included by the country as part of the Bay Islands Department. Claimed by the United States under the Guano Islands Act in 1863, occupied by a United States company broadcasting station from 1907 to 1927 and by a United States government radio beacon since 1961, the island dispute was being resolved in 1970. The United States intended to recognize Honduran sovereignty over the Swan Islands if it could retain its installations on the islands.

The Swan Islands lie ninety-seven miles offshore Honduras and are each less than two miles long, not counting surrounding islets. According to a census taken in the 1960s, Great Swan Island had a population of thirty-four (twenty-five American and nine British citizens), and Little Swan was unpopulated.

The longest unresolved border is the southern one with El Salvador. The undefined area extends from the far southwestern corner where El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala meet, eastward along the Sumpul and Lempa rivers, and ends at the Goascorán River, which defines the boundary from the Gulf of Fonseca northward. The undefined area includes all of El Salvador's northern boundary but not that republic's eastern limits.

Offshore territories to the south are Tigre Island, Grand Zacate Island, and Gueguensi Island, all located in the Gulf of Fonseca. Amapala, the country's major Pacific port and gateway to the rivers that service the agricultural lands of the southwest, is located on Tigre Island.

Political Subdivisions

The Republic is divided into one Central District and eighteen departments ranging in size from a little over 100 square miles (Bay Islands) to over 9,000 square miles (Olancho). The Central District is the seat of the government and consists of Tegucigalpa and a suburb, Comayagüela, across the Choluteca River.

Departments are administrative arms of the central government and are headed by governors appointed by the president. Departments are divided into municipalities; the department capital is also

Table 1. Departments and Number of Municipalities in Honduras, 1968

Department	Municipality
Atlántida	7
Colón	9
Comayagua	18
Copán	23
Cortés	11
Choluteca	16
El Paraíso	18
Francisco Morazán	27[1]
Gracias a Dios	2[2]
Intibucá	16
Islas de la Bahía	4
La Paz	19
Lempira	27
Ocotepeque	16
Olancho	22
Santa Bárbara	26
Valle	9
Yoro	11
Total	281

[1] Includes the Central District.

[2] Puerto Lempira, Brus Laguna, and Guagüina were cited by the 1961 census as municipalities of Gracias a Dios Department; in 1968 Guagüina was no longer cited as a municipality.

Source: Adapted from Pan American Union, Departamento de Estadística, *América en cifras, 1967, Situación fisica: Territoria y clima*, Washington, 1967, p. 20; and República de Honduras, Secretaría de Economíca y Hacienda, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Compendio Estadístico*, Tegucigalpa, 1968, pp. 1—3.

the capital of the major municipality. Department and municipal capitals are referred to by the term *cabecera*. In 1968 there were 281 municipalities within the country, but only 63 of these were urban centers by the 1961 census definition (see table 1).

Municipalities, two-thirds of which have a population of less than 1,000, are divided into smaller units called *aldeas*, which may be villages or hamlets. Still smaller settlements composed of widely dispersed homes in rural areas form *caseríos*, subdivisions of the *aldea*. Officials of the municipalities and their subdivisions are popularly elected.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Except in parts of the north coast and in eastern Olancho Department, most of the place names are those that existed during the colonial period. With the exception of the twentieth-century exploitation of the north coast east of Puerto Cortés, urban settlement patterns have altered little since the sixteenth century. Rural settlement patterns were most ostensibly changed by the liberal agrarian laws brought by independence (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). Small settlements founded throughout the west and southwest during the colonial period have grown into urban centers, and seminomadic farmers have replaced the Indians that once roamed the outlying highlands. Eastern Colón and Gracias a Dios departments remain relatively unexplored, their inclement coastal regions retarding exploration of arable land in the interior. Some towns, such as Trujillo and Comayagua, have waned in importance, largely because of altered commercial interests but also because of political reasons.

From the time of conquest throughout the 400-year colonial period, the population remained at less than 100,000 but has increased fourteenfold in the century since independence. Nearly all of this increment has resulted from natural increase except that since 1950, when an estimated 300,000 Salvadoreans crossed the border in search of land.

The North Coast, Coastal, and Lowland Settlements

Around the turn of the twentieth century, two foreign-owned fruit companies came to the north coast of Honduras to grow bananas. They cleared the tropical coastal jungles and made the area habitable for traditional highland dwellers. In addition, they contracted labor from the British West Indies.

As both companies expanded and prospered, they could offer such services as housing, education, and medical facilities which, however rudimentary, were unavailable in the rest of the country. These benefits attracted even more people from the highlands and from the British Caribbean, so that in 1970 nearly everyone in the area spoke both Spanish and English.

Cities of the banana area include the ports of La Ceiba, Puerto Cortés, and Tela, as well as Trujillo and Aguán valley plantations and San Pedro Sula, the commercial center of the country.

By 1961 all medium-size urban centers with populations between 11,000 and 59,000 were in the north coast area except Choluteca, and all were in some way related to the banana industry.

San Pedro Sula is the largest lowlands settlement, thirty-eight miles up the Ulúa River from Puerto Cortés. In 1964 its population was estimated at 100,000. It is the nation's only modern industrial center and the distribution point for goods traveling into the interior. Because of its recent growth, it exhibits relatively modern residences and wide boulevards, but it also has numerous parks and squares characteristic of older Spanish towns.

Puerto Cortés is the principal port. East of it is Tela, center for one of the fruit companies and site of its experimental farm. To the east of Tela is La Ceiba, link in the railway system that extends through the banana country and the distribution center for the north and northwest.

Around the banana plantations scattered along the railways are clusters of small hamlets where the laborers live. Residents of these hamlets have to travel to the larger villages or cities to take advantage of educational and medical facilities offered by the fruit companies. Other lowland settlements include the department of the Bay Islands—Roatán, Utila, and Guanaja—ten to forty miles northwest off Puerto Castilla. Inhabitants make their livelihood from coconut and banana cultivation.

On the Pacific coast, circling the Gulf of Fonseca are San Lorenzo, which is the debarkation point for goods traveling to the country's only Pacific port, Amapala; and Choluteca, the seventh largest city in the country and the center of an important livestock, coffee, and mining area.

Highlands and Rural Settlements

Highland settlements run from isolated farms through hamlets, haciendas, and towns to large urban centers. Large clusters of inhabitants are found around Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, and Copán because these are the principal commercial centers of the west. Villages and hamlets have grown up around local commercial agricultural, lumber, and mining enterprises, and the coffee plantations east and west of the capital have attracted new settlements along transportation routes.

Also characteristic of this area are large farm estates that have workers' housing provided by the landowner. There are also subsistence farmers scattered throughout the mountainous area in the west and southwest, some in inaccessible areas but also along communication routes that service larger centers. Much land is still held in the *ejidal* (see Glossary) system around municipalities, and this form of settlement is especially prevalent in the mountainous Indian areas of Intibucá and Lempira.

Basic sanitary and community facilities are lacking in most rural areas. The desire for better living conditions has fostered urban growth and migration to the cities, but the rural and urban distribution of the population has not altered considerably since the banana industries were established.

Population Distribution

For purpose of discussing population distribution the country is frequently divided into three zones (see table 2). These zones have no administrative function and do not include the Bay Islands off the Caribbean coast. Tigre Island, where Amapala is located in the Gulf of Fonseca, is included.

Table 2. Population, Area, and Density of Honduras, 1961[1]

Zone and Department	Population		Area		Density Per Square Mile
	Number	Percent	Square Miles	Percent	
Eastern:					
Colon	41,904	2.2	3,426.56	7.9	12.2
Gracias a Dios	10,905	0.6	6,420.84	14.9	1.7
Olancho	110,744	5.9	9,401.88	21.7	11.8
Subtotal	163,553	8.7	19,249.28	44.5	8.5
Central:					
Atlántida	92,914	4.9	1,641.39	3.8	56.6
Choluteca	149,175	7.9	1,625.87	3.8	91.8
El Paraíso	106,823	5.7	2,786.91	6.4	38.3
Francisco Morazán	284,428	15.1	3,068.03	7.1	92.7
Yoro	130,547	6.9	3,065.32	7.1	42.6
Subtotal	763,887	40.5	12,187.52	28.2	62.7
Western:					
Comayagua	96,442	5.1	2,006.33	4.6	48.1
Copán	126,183	6.7	1,236.68	2.9	102.0
Cortés	200,099	10.6	1,526.64	3.5	131.1
Intibucá	73,138	3.9	1,186.18	2.7	61.7
La Paz	60,600	3.2	899.84	2.1	67.3
Lempira	111,546	5.9	1,656.25	3.8	67.3
Ocotepeque	52,540	2.8	648.72	4.6	81.0
Santa Bárbara	146,909	7.8	1,975.02	4.6	74.4
Valle	80,907	4.3	604.09	1.4	133.9
Subtotal	948,364	50.3	11,739.75	27.1	80.8
Islas de la Bahía[2]	8,961	0.5	100.62	0.2	89.1
Grand Total	1,884,765	100.0	43,277.17	100.0	43.6

[1] Population figures according to census of Honduras, 1961.

[2] Islas de la Bahía (Bay Islands) not included in zonal grouping.

Source: Adapted from Pan American Union, Department of Social Affairs, *Housing in Honduras*, Washington, 1964, p. 9.

The Western zone (including the departments of Comayagua, Copán, Cortés, Intibucá, La Paz, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Santa Bárbara, and Valle) is the most densely populated area with 80.8 persons per square mile but contains little over a quarter of the land area. Cortés and Valle are the most densely populated departments, with 131 and 134 persons per square mile, respectively.

The Central zone (including the departments of Atlántida, Choluteca, El Paraíso, Francisco Morazán, and Yoro) averages 62 persons per square mile and constitutes about the same amount of land as the Western zone. The Eastern zone is the least populous with about 9 persons per square mile and constitutes almost half of the country's landmass. The newest department in the Eastern zone, Gracias a Dios, has only 1.7 persons per square mile.

Table 3. City Population Increase in Honduras, 1950 and 1961[1]

Zone and City	Population[2]		Increase	
	1950	1961	Number	Percent
Eastern	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Central:				
La Ceiba	16,645	24,880	8,235	49.5
Tela	12,614	13,607	993	7.9
Choluteca	7,075	11,483	4,408	62.3
Tegucigalpa[3]	72,385	134,075	61,717	85.3
El Progreso	9,150	13,797	4,647	50.8
Subtotal	117,869	197,842	80,000	255.8
Western:				
San Pedro Sula	21,139	58,632	37,493	177.4
Puerto Cortés	12,228	17,048	4,820	39.4
Subtotal	33,367	75,680	42,313	216.8
Total	151,236	273,522	122,313	472.6

n.a.—not available.

[1] Includes only cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

[2] Population figures according to census of Honduras, 1950 and 1961.

[3] Includes Comayagüela.

Source: Adapted from Pan American Union, Department of Social Affairs, *Housing in Honduras*, Washington, 1964, p. 11.

Cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants contain about 14 percent of the whole population and 63 percent of the urban population. Most of these cities have grown considerably during the last intercensal period (1950–61) and are still growing (see table 3). The biggest cities are San Pedro Sula and the capital, Tegucigalpa, which account for close to half of the entire urban population.

The rural population exhibits a higher annual rate of growth than the urban population, 3.1 and 2.8 percent, respectively. During the intercensal period the urban population grew 35 percent, while the rural population grew 39 percent. The higher rate of increase among the rural population explains why rapid urban migration has not effectively changed the rural nature of the country. According to the 1961 census the rural population was estimated at close to 75 percent.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Housing

The latest census of 1961 suggests a serious deficiency in adequate housing. Houses are typically constructed of adobe or *bajareque*—a pebble and mud mixture used for caulking between two wood walls—or of wood where it is readily available. Floors are usually of dirt. Most houses are constructed by their owners and are small and overcrowded. More than three-fourths have no piped water, no sanitary facilities, and no electricity for lighting. Cooking facilities are minimal and are frequently in a corridor outside the living quarters.

Housing Inventory

There were 325,492 family units in 1961, of which 76.8 percent were in rural areas. About 24 percent of the houses had one room, 43 percent had two rooms, 21 percent had three rooms, and about 12 percent had four rooms or more.

One-room houses with combined cooking and living and sleeping quarters, called *ranchos*, were considerably more prevalent in the departments of Choluteca, Lempira, Ocotepeque, Valle, La Paz, Intibucá, and Gracias a Dios. Houses with two or more rooms were most prevalent in port areas, the capital, and on the Bay Islands.

According to the United Nations definition, overcrowding results when there are three or more persons living in one room. Roughly 45 percent of all family housing is adjudged overcrowded. Around 72 percent of all Honduran homes are owner occupied; the balance are either rented, chiefly in port areas and the capital, or given in partial payment for services, such as to agricultural workers.

Some 74 percent of all houses have earthen floors, but this average reaches a high of over 90 percent in the departments of El Paraíso, Intibucá, Lempira, and Olancho. Overall, 87 percent of the homes in rural areas have earthen floors, whereas in the capital the average is only 30 percent. Forty-seven percent of the homes in the main urban centers have clay and cement tiled floors; wood floors are common in Gracias a Dios and the Bay Islands, where the houses are often constructed on wood pilings.

Over half of all housing units have exterior walls of adobe or *bajareque* except in the northern coastal area where wood is predominant. Brick and cement walls are used in only 4 percent of the homes, mostly in urban areas.

A little more than half of all the houses in the country are roofed with ceramic tiles, but zinc sheets are widespread in the coastal areas and the Bay Islands. Around 28 percent of the remainder are roofed with *manaca*, a palm leaf covering, especially in the departments of Gracias a Dios, Colón, Atlántida, La Paz, Copán, and Yoro. *Manaca* is particularly prevalent in rural areas, and its instance is as high as 95 percent in Gracias a Dios.

Twelve percent of all houses have inside piped water, and another 13 percent have water within 215 yards of the house. Ten percent or fewer of the homes in the departments of Copán, Choluteca, El

Paraíso, Gracias a Dios, Intibucá, Lempira, Olancho, and Valle, however, have either of these arrangements; but overall, 91 percent of all rural housing is without water. Only in the departments of Cortés, Atlántida, and Francisco Morazán is water service available to over 40 percent of the homes.

As of 1961, of total houses, 86 percent lacked flushing toilets or drainable latrines; of the 14 percent with facilities, 7 percent were private and 7 percent were shared with the neighbors. Almost all of these facilities, however, were found in the departments of Cortés, Francisco Morazán, Atlántida, and the Bay Islands. Throughout the country, 49 percent of the homes in urban areas and 97 percent of those in rural areas were without sanitation facilities. Inside bathrooms were found in 9 percent of all the houses; an additional 8 percent share facilities with the neighbors. Almost all of these are found in urban centers.

Eighty-five percent of all homes in 1961 lacked electricity. About half utilized kerosine, and the remainder used candles for lighting. Houses in Atlántida, Cortés, Francisco Morazán, and the Bay Islands were more apt to have electricity than those in other departments. Only 2 percent of all rural homes had electricity, as compared with 57 percent or urban homes. Over 90 percent of all homes use wood or charcoal for cooking.

Housing Policies and Institutions

In the decade before 1961, an estimated 6,780 houses, or about 4.3 houses per 1,000 people, were built annually. Most of these were owner built, or rebuilt houses, and did not necessarily comply with minimum building standards. Those houses built by construction companies account for a very small percentage of the increase and were erected primarily in the capital and San Pedro Sula, where three-fourths of all construction companies and personnel are located.

The need for new and improved housing led to government participation in the industry as early as 1955. The first project was administered by the Office of Public Works, but in 1957 a specialized agency, the Housing Institute (Instituto de la Vivienda), was created. In rural areas new construction has been handled by the National Agrarian Institute. The 1965—69 National Development Plan foresaw still greater government participation in low-income housing, which has traditionally been unable to attract private investment.

Government participation notwithstanding, the private sector has financed and built the bulk of the new units, mainly for middle and upper income families. The majority of the most recently constructed homes are found in the capital, Puerto Cortés, La Ceiba, Olanchito, and other urban areas where the Housing Institute has been able to encourage financing. A special rural project calling for the construction of 500 units in the Sula valley in southern Honduras was promoted by the Housing Institute but financed by a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank. Aside from a severe shortage of funds for housing, there is both a lack of coordination between the promotions of the Housing Institute and those of the National Agrarian Institute in rural areas and a necessity for standard building codes.

Plans to expand domestic water and sewerage service to homes are also under two different organizations. The National Autonomous Water Supply and Sewage Service is concerned with urban areas and has recently been constructing twenty-one water systems that will serve 14,000 people. Water and sewerage service for rural areas (defined as having populations of 1,000 or less) is administered by the Environmental Sanitation Division of the Office of Public Health; nine new water systems had been installed in rural areas by 1968.

Colonization and Resettlement Housing

The Housing Institute has begun construction of a major subdivision located outside Tegucigalpa called Colonia 21 de octubre. The 511-unit project will include a community center, a retail and market area, and space for playgrounds, churches, a bus terminal, and a first-aid center.

Two other housing projects in Tela and La Lima were constructed between 1963 and 1965 for Tela Railroad Company employees. The combined 184-unit project was financed by a loan from the Agency for International Development. The subdivisions have a gridiron pattern of streets around individual lots of 3,072 square feet, and all houses are single family, three-bedroom detached units. Both communities have parks, playgrounds, and a community center. A similar Tela project was proposed for El Progreso.

Another 1,000-unit project was planned for San Pedro Sula, for Federation of Workers of the North of Honduras union members, financed by an Inter-American Development Bank loan. In addition, at least eight "impact" projects have been undertaken on the north coast with funds supplied by the American Institute for Free Labor Development.

The National Agrarian Institute began the Catacamas resettlement project as part of a plan to improve rural living conditions in 1952 and since then has formulated more than a dozen other programs. By 1970 the institute was operating, or proposed to operate, fourteen resettlement colonies in rural and urban areas. Seven were in the vicinity of Tela and San Pedro Sula, one around Trujillo, two around Catacamas, three around Choluteca, and one around Comayagua. By far the largest was the Rio Aguán Valley project for the resettlement of 6,000 or more families on 173,000 acres. Eight hundred families have already been resettled on 31,000 acres in various parts of the country. All colonizers and resettlers are, and must be, Honduran by birth.

Health

Diet and Nutrition

Dietary staples include corn, sorghum, rice, beans, and wheat. Corn, sorghum, and beans are husked by beating the stalks and vines with a pole, but rice is husked by machine. Mules are employed to trample husks from wheat. Corn and sorghum are prepared by grinding the grain on a stone by hand and mixing them with either lime or wood ash to form *tortillas* (corn pancakes) or *tamales* (ground corncakes).

In addition to these staples, bananas, plantains, and other fresh fruits and vegetables may supplement the diet, but much of this produce that is raised in the rural areas is sold in the market rather than consumed. Eggs and cheese are eaten, but little meat is consumed. On the north coast and Bay Islands, the diet is supplemented with fish. Most people drink coffee.

Because of the pattern of food consumption, the diet is rich in carbohydrates and low in the protein necessary for body-building amino acids. Although about half of the population consumes more than the necessary daily protein intake, an official estimate suggests that the diet of 158,000 children under ten years of age in rural areas is inadequate in protein.

Caloric deficiency also affects a significant proportion of the rural population. More than 85 percent of the population consumes less than the daily requirement. Children in rural areas consume fewer calories than adults, and their stature and weight are frequently affected adversely.

A recent in-depth study of the national diet prepared by the Nutrition Institute of Central America (Instituto Nutricional de Centro América y Panamá—INCAP) revealed that 50 percent of the families studied (25,000 people in 276 of 281 municipalities) consumed only 20 percent of the recommended requirement of vitamin A. Six percent consumed the recommended amount and were from higher socioeconomic and urban backgrounds than those who consumed less. Those family members with the highest deficiences were children less than ten years old. More vitamin A was consumed by urban than rural inhabitants.

Rural families also consume less riboflavin. Twenty-seven percent of the families studied by INCAP in rural areas showed a low consumption, and over 5 percent showed deficient consumption. Low riboflavin ingestion was more prevalent in children than in adults.

Rarely were either vitamin B_2, calcium, thiamine, niacine, or ascorbic acid intake found to be insufficient.

About a third of the population is estimated to consume less than the recommended amount of iron, and some people, especially women and children, suffered from iron deficiency. Altitude made no significant difference in the prevalence of iron deficiency.

Dietary and Nutritional Diseases

Among illnesses caused by malnutrition, the most prevalent are anemia and goiter. Anemia is especially prevalent in tropical areas except in San Pedro Sula, where its instance is less than half that in rural areas. In rural areas children between the ages of twelve and seventeen are highly susceptible, but pregnant women show the highest susceptibility overall.

Endemic goiter, resulting from iodine deficiency, presents a severe health problem to the nation. An estimated 17 percent of the population has some degree of goiter. It is more prevalent and more severe in girls and young women than in men. Among the departments studied by INCAP, instances of goiter were over 20 percent in Lempira, Santa Bárbara, Choluteca, El Paraíso, and Colón. Only six departments had an instance of goiter under 10 percent.

As well as causing the high prevalence of goiter and anemia, malnutrition retards the proper development of the body. By five years of age a male child is 1½ years behind a well-fed child in weight, and a female child is 1¼ years behind in weight. Height deviations follow the same pattern.

Nonetheless, INCAP found in 1969 that the overall physical condition of the population was good, especially those from rural areas. The conclusion of the organization was that the greater consumption of nutritive foods in adult life compensated for their lack in childhood. Almost half of the urban dwellers studied by INCAP were adjudged in poor physical condition, but the rural farmers were found well adapted to the heavy exercise required of their pattern of living.

Traditional Medical Beliefs

Folk beliefs about diseases and their cure are widespread, especially beliefs about digestive disorders. Many persons believe that indigestion is caused by eating something cold, getting chilled, or having something cold attack the stomach. Certain foods and herbs that are heated or are believed to have an innate hot quality are fed to the sick person in an effort to cure him.

For some childhood diseases a number of substances may be rubbed on the child's back or head, or an egg may be passed over the child's head to treat him. Other diseases are attributed to having dead blood in the veins or to being too near something that is dead.

Many persons also believe in witches and consider them able to cause mental and physical illness. In some places the person believed to have caused the disease is also considered the curer.

Earth eating is widespread, and some children reportedly die from it. In some areas the urge is held to be related to intestinal worms, and in other areas people believe that the blood uses the earth.

A number of terms refer to diagnosticians and persons who treat illnesses. The term *doctor* usually, but not always, refers to someone with formal medical training. Other people who are untrained are called pharmacist, curer, midwife or, simply, intelligent. Pharmacists are usually men, but curers and so-called intelligent persons may be men or women.

Every town has a store that sells medicinal supplies, and the storekeeper is called a pharmacist. He prescribes medical treatment on the basis of experience and what knowledge he may have acquired from others. He treats all types of disease, and people from many areas come to see him. Curers and persons who are called intelligent treat only people in their own villages and usually specialize in only one type of disorder.

Principal Causes of Death

The major known causes of death are gastritis, enteritis, and associated diseases and are held to be directly related to the unsanitary conditions and lack of potable water from which the country suffers. The percentage of deaths caused by these digestive disorders has increased from 2.6 percent in 1959 to 7.3 percent in 1964. Deaths caused by infectious and parasitic diseases were decreasing, while the incidence of deaths caused by accidents and chronic diseases was increasing.

Accidents, suicide, and homicide accounted for close to 7 percent of certified deaths in 1967, and respiratory diseases, including influenza, penumonia, and bronchitis, accounted for almost 6 percent. Another 2.2 percent died from cancer, and about an equal number of children died from diseases of early infancy. Almost half of the recorded deaths were from natural, ill-defined, or unknown causes. In 1964, when the most recent in-depth studies of the causes of death were completed by the Pan American Health Organization, it was noted that almost 50 percent of the registered death certificates contained inadequate information on the cause of death.

A number of other diseases prevail throughout the country: tuberculosis; tetanus; malaria; anemia; vitamin deficiency; heart and vascular diseases; and diseases of the digestive system other than gastritis and enteritis. Treatment has generally been retarded owing to the lack of medical facilities and personnel, knowledge of health hazards, installation of sanitary facilities, and financial resources.

Major inoculation or eradication campaigns have been initiated against the spread of smallpox, diphtheria, yellow fever, and malaria. Smallpox vaccination increased from 12,824 in 1959 to 1,589,604 in 1966, and no instances of the disease were reported as early as 1964. Diphtheria has also been effectively controlled through a vaccination campaign. Yellow fever, which in 1949 was considered endemic throughout most of the country, had been virtually eradicated by 1967 by treating the breeding areas of the mosquito that carries the disease.

The campaign against malaria, endemic in 78 percent of the country, has not been so successful, but it is a more recent program than the yellow fever campaign. A large area of the country, where some 890,000 persons live, was in 1970 under the malaria eradication program. In June 1968 a program to iodize salt was begun to combat the prevalence of goiter.

Life Statistics. Because so many deaths go unreported, there is considerable difference between the reported crude death rate and the estimated one. The Pan American Health Organization reported the death rate at 9.5 per 1,000 population in 1964, approximately the United States rate, but it is estimated by the United Nations to be around 17 per 1,000. Because of the high frequency of childhood diseases, the mortality rate for children under five years of age is over 45 percent of total deaths. Children are more in danger of dying between twenty-eight days and eleven months of age than when they are younger or older. Both the crude and infant death rates have decreased, however, during the last decade.

The birth rate has been stable for the last decade, at 34 per 1,000 but is projected to increase to 38 per 1,000 in 1980. By the last census, in 1961, the population was calculated to be around 1,885,000 and was projected for 1970 at 2,583,000; in twenty-one years it could be doubled. Life expectancy was also projected to increase during the same period. At the time of the last census, it was calculated at forty-four years; in 1970 it was estimated at fifty years and to increase to fifty-five in 1980.

Health Services, Personnel, and Medical Education

Information available on the country's health services is generally inconsistent. According to the Pan American Health Organization, there was a total of 4,155 hospital beds, or 2 for every 1,000 persons, in 1964. Over half were in departmental capitals or large cities, for a rate of 18 per 1,000; the rest were in nonurban areas, for a rate of 0.9 per 1,000. Over three-fourths of all the beds were in government facilities. United Nations estimates for 1966 show 3,725 beds, or 1 bed for every 630 persons.

The Pan American Health Organization also reports that in 1965 the country had a total of thirty-five hospitals. Of these, there were twenty-six general, one maternity, one mental, two tuberculosis, and two leprosy hospitals. Three were undefined.

There is a grave shortage of medical personnel throughout the country, especially in the rural areas. In 1966 the United Nations reported that there were 440 physicians, 78 dentists, and 1,294 nurses on hospital staffs. Of the nurses, only about 300 were graduate nurses, and the remainder were nurse's aides.

Hospital services are largely unavailable in the rural areas, which must rely on local pharmacists and curers or on mobile health units. In the cities workers may rely on government facilities or on corporation facilities primarily in the banana regions. Large commercial operations often have their own hospitals or clinics or arrange to have their employees treated at one of the private facilities on a contractual basis. When in need of serious surgery, upper class persons who can afford the expense usually go to the United States for treatment.

The medical training center for the country is at the National University in the Central District. Professional degrees are offered in medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry. These courses take seven, five, and five years, respectively. Advanced training is offered in each of the courses except dentistry, as well as in surgery. In 1964 thirteen doctors were graduated by the Faculty of Medicine. The nursing school is part of the medical school and offers courses in practical nursing.

Social Security and Emergency Relief

Various pieces of labor and social legislation were enacted in the late 1950s, including the 1955 Charter of Social Guarantees and the 1957 Law of Social Insurance. The 1957 social security law was not immediately put into effect, largely because of the lack of an administrative agency. The new Labor Code of 1957 incorporated the 1955 Charter of Social Guarantees and reenacted and revised the 1957 Law of Social Insurance (see ch. 8, The Economy).

The 1959 Law of Social Insurance eventually was put into effect in 1962. The law, however, specifically stated that its initial application would be exclusively in the Central District, coverage being limited to occupational diseases, accidents, and maternity. Since 1962 the lack of labor statistics and employment services and of facilities for calculating the risks and premiums for accident insurance, has interfered with implementation of the law.

In early 1970 the Social Security Institute was an autonomous body, separately funded but working with the government through the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. The institute covers accidents, sickness, and maternity in the Central District and San Pedro Sula. In the future, family subsidies, old age, orphanhood, forced shutdowns, and occupational diseases will also be covered.

In 1965 a total of 42,000 persons were covered by social security; 27,000 were workers, and the remainder consisted of their spouses and their children less than two years of age. Protection was financed by a 10-percent tax on all salaries up to L600 (2 lempiras equal US$1). The employee and the employer paid one-quarter each, and the government the other half. In 1965 all of those covered worked in the Central District, but in 1966 the services were extended to San Pedro Sula with increased benefits.

Little information is available on relief programs. A few small-scale programs have been initiated to improve diets and sanitation as well as a program to give children breakfast before going to school. In all cases they were handled locally by banana company employees, although most were financed by international organizations.

CHAPTER 4

POPULATION AND ETHNIC GROUPS

In 1970 the population was estimated at 2,583,000. The average growth rate in the 1960s was 3.4 percent a year. The country had fewer than 60 persons per square mile, but the high growth rate put a great strain on the developing economy just to maintain services already provided. About 90 percent of the population was *ladino* (person manifesting non-Indian behavior—see Glossary). The remaining 10 percent was culturally diverse, made up of Indian groups of varying degrees of acculturation, Antillean whites and Negroes, a small number of commercial people of predominantly eastern Mediterranean origin, and resident foreigners.

In many respects the population was typical of most newly developing countries; the growth rate was high, and the people were predominantly young, rural, and agricultural. They were distributed unevenly throughout the country. Rural areas along the south coast were densely populated, and there was outmigration from the area. The banana plantations in the river valleys along the north coast, on the other hand, attracted migrants from the interior and other areas, including El Salvador. The northeast lowlands were for the most part undeveloped, although they provided a future outlet for the needs of the growing population, including agricultural lands and living space. Urbanization was proceeding slowly. The percentage of urban population did not change greatly between 1950 and 1970. Interurban migration was taking place, however, and the character of the urban population did change as people moved from the small towns to the greater metropolitan areas of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula and to the cities along the north coast.

The *ladinos*, who constitute the predominant ethnic group, are the descendants of both the Spanish colonists who settled in the sixteenth century and the Indians they found when they arrived. Usually, in the racial sense, they are *mestizos* (persons with mixed Indian and white usually Spanish heritage). Their culture also represents an amalgam of traits taken from the two groups as well, in addition to modern influences from outside the country.

The Indians, who still exhibited distinctive cultural traits in the 1960s, had diverse origins. At the time of the conquest there were two general groupings—the settled agricultural Indians of the west and the isolated, seminomadic forest Indians of the north coast and the northeast lowlands. It was the Indians of the west with whom the Spanish colonists had the most significant contact and who contributed to the *ladino* culture that developed.

In the 1960s the most important of the Indians were the Lenca, who lived in municipalities of the southwest highlands; a modified Indian group, they were on the way to becoming absorbed into the dominant culture. In 1970 few spoke their native language. Separate municipalities, the boundaries of which in many cases were decided during colonial times, retained different cultural traits, but they exhibited many characteristics that set them apart from the *ladinos*. Most worked community-owned lands; some still produced handcrafted goods and retained a religious structure which, though Catholic, was different and apart from that of the *ladinos*.

The least acculturated of the Indian groups included the Miskito, Sumo, and Paya Indians of the northeast, whose isolation was of major importance in maintaining their traditional culture, despite some Hispanic and English influences. Related linguistically and culturally to the forest Indians of South America, they practiced slash-and-burn agriculture and believed that numerous spirits directly influenced their lives.

The Black Caribs are descendants of Carib Indians of the Antilles and escaped Negro slaves. Originally under English influence on the island of Saint Vincent in the Caribbean, they began moving in the early 1800s to the north coast of Honduras, where they were eventually converted to Catholicism; they absorbed other aspects of *ladino* culture while retaining many of their own, including certain religious and ceremonial practices.

The Bay Islanders, including both Negroes and whites, are sometimes called the least acculturated group in the country. They arrived in the 1830s from British Honduras and the island of Grand Cayman and have remained oriented to the Protestant, English-speaking culture of parts of the Antilles, despite their increasing contact with *ladinos* who have moved to the islands and those on the mainland. Fishing is the most important activity of these people, who sell most of their catch on the mainland; many islanders gather coconuts, which they convert into copra, or practice subsistence agriculture.

Spanish is the official language. It is spoken by nearly everyone, including the few Indians who still speak their native indigenous languages and the Bay Islanders, whose first language is English.

POPULATION

Based on the 1961 census figure of 1,884,765, the population in 1970 was estimated at 2,583,000. The 1961 census underenumerated the population by about 5.3 percent, and the 1970 estimate took this into account.

The average annual growth rate between 1961 and 1970 was high, about 3.4 percent, a strain for a country with already overburdened social services and economic resources. Overall density in 1970 was only 58 persons per square mile. But immigration from El Salvador was an increasing burden to the problem of high population growth. In 1969 a conflict broke out between the two countries, and many Salvadoreans were forced to leave (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

The distribution of population throughout the country is highly uneven (see table 4). The two most densely populated departments are Cortés in the northwest and Valle in the south (see ch. 3,

Table 4. Population and other Demographic Features of Honduras, by Department

		Percent		
Department	Estimated Population (1969)	Average Annual Growth (between 1961 and 1969)*	Urban Population (1961)	Density per Square Mile (1969)
Francisco Morazán	406,800	4.6	49.1	133
Atlántida	127,500	4.1	42.7	78
Colón	58,200	4.2	10.7	17
Comayagua	130,100	3.8	15.0	65
Copán	161,800	3.2	9.7	131
Cortés	281,500	4.3	53.5	184
Choluteca	200,600	3.8	12.0	123
El Paraíso	134,800	3.0	12.9	48
Gracias a Dios	15,100	4.2	....	2
Intibucá	89,300	2.6	8.2	75
Islas de la Bahía	9,800	1.0	31.7	97
La Paz	71,200	2.0	10.8	79
Lempira	135,400	2.5	1.7	82
Ocotepeque	60,400	1.8	10.9	93
Olancho	138,300	2.8	12.7	15
Santa Bárbara	207,500	4.4	11.6	105
Valle	99,100	2.6	10.0	164
Yoro	167,500	3.2	19.7	55
Honduras	2,494,900	3.6	23.2	58

*Figures indicate the relative growth of the different departments; figures are all too high because 1961 census estimates undernumerated overall population by more than 5 percent and the 1969 estimates took this into account, but the 1961 figures did not.

Source: Adapted from Pan American Union, Departamento de Estadística, *América en cifras, 1967, Situación Demográfica: Estado y Movimiento de la Población*, Washington, 1968; Republica de Honduras, Secretaría de Economíca y Hacienda, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Compendio Estadístico*, Tegucigalpa, 1968; and Pan American Union, Department of Social Affairs, *Housing in Honduras*, Washington, 1964.

Physical Environment and Living Conditions). Demographic pressure in Valle and other southern departments has resulted partly from the presence of Salvadorean immigrants. Some areas, particularly Mosquitia in the northeast, are very sparsely populated.

Growth and Mobility

The growth rates in the twentieth century have been consistently high. Natural increase has been responsible for most of the growth, although immigration played a small role in the early decades, when the banana plantations opened up, and in the 1950s and 1960s, when the population crush in El Salvador encouraged many of that country's nationals to migrate to Honduras.

The average annual growth rate between 1961 and 1970 was about 3.4 percent; this high growth pattern put pressure on the country's ability to keep pace in health, economic, and educational services. In 1967, according to the official registry, the overall birth rate was 44 per 1,000 inhabitants, and the death rate 8.4 per 1,000. The Organization of American States (OAS) estimated that the actual birth and death rates were considerably higher but agreed that the resultant growth rate was about 3.4 percent per year. The OAS also estimated that the growth rate would rise to 3.8 percent per year by 1980.

Growth rates varied considerably from department to department between 1961 and 1969. Those showing the lowest growth rates included the Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía), Ocotepeque, Valle, La Paz, Lempira, and Intibucá. The last three departments had significant numbers of Indians, among whom birth rates are often lower and death rates higher than among *ladinos*. Valle, on the other hand, was densely populated, and there may have been emigration from the area.

The departments with the highest growth rates included Francisco Morazán, Santa Bárbara, Colón, Gracias a Dios, and Atlántida. Urban migration to Tegucigalpa probably accounted for Francisco Morazán's high growth rate. Migration to the banana areas in the north coastal area where work opportunities were available accounted for the growth rates of Santa Bárbara, Atlántida, and Colón. This migration has been continued since the beginning of the twentieth century; between 1930 and 1960, however, Colón's growth was very slow owing to the fact that the banana plantations in the area were overcome by plant disease and people moved away (see ch. 8, The Economy). In the 1960s the department, particularly in the Aguán River valley region, was the focus for the government's colonization program, and people were again attracted to the area (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions).

Birth rates in rural areas tend to be higher than in urban areas which, in the 1961 census, were defined as centers having 1,000 or more inhabitants, a complete primary school of six grades, and a number of other services. As a result, despite the movement from rural to urban areas, the percentage of people living in urban and rural areas did not change greatly between 1930 and 1970, when the rural population represented about 72 percent of the total. During this period, however, there was much interurban movement from the smaller towns to the larger cities, accounting for the tremendous increases in the populations of San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa, Choluteca, and La Ceiba. Among the most urbanized departments were those located on the north coast area where cities have sprung up to serve the banana trade, including Cortés, Atlántida, and Francisco Morazán, in which the national capital is located. The most rural departments were Gracias a Dios in the underdeveloped northeast and Lempira, Intibucá, and Copán, which had significant Indian populations.

Composition

The age profile, being overwhelmingly young, was typical of a developing country. In 1969 half the population was under seventeen years of age, a fact that put a great strain on already burdened national resources and services. A relatively small proportion of the population was required to support a large group of economically inactive young persons, but many young persons had to leave school to help support their families. Health facilities had to be geared to the problems of the young, and education facilities had to expand rapidly to keep up with population growth and to assist adults in becoming literate (see ch. 7, Education, Culture, and Information).

In 1969 there were a few more females than males, 1,249,000 and 1,245,900, respectively. This varied somewhat according to age and place of residence. For the most part, men outnumbered women in newly opened frontier and migratory labor areas, and women outnumbered men in the more cosmopolitan urban areas, such as Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, where jobs were available for them. Up to the age of twenty males outnumbered females owing to the higher number of male births, but over the age of twenty females outnumbered males because of the higher death rate among males.

In 1950 the foreign-born population officially was small; the census for that year listed 32,684 persons of foreign nationality representing about 2 percent of the country's population; more than 20,000 of them were from El Salvador, and most of the remainder were from other parts of Central America. The census figure for Salvadoreans, however, is generally considered a vast underestimate. In 1969 there were an estimated 300,000 living in the country. They were resented for economic reasons, and during and after the 1969 war about 60,000 of them were expelled from the country.

The people are predominantly *ladinos* and racially, for the most part, are *mestizos*, although they exhibit some Negro blood. The category, which is cultural, includes some pureblood Indians and whites and represents a mixture of Spanish and indigenous traits. In the 1960s one source estimated that about 91 percent were *ladinos*; 6 percent, Indians; 2 percent, Negroes; and 1 percent, whites.

ETHNIC GROUPS

Ladinos

Most of the Spaniards came during the first two centuries after the conquest, most having arrived by 1750. The men were unaccompanied by women and mixed easily with the Indian population. The first Negroes were brought to work in the mines, but slavery was never very important and was terminated early in the country's history. These Negroes were assimilated easily into the *ladino* culture, unlike some other Negro or mixed Negro-Indian groups that came later. *Ladinos* early established dominance over other groups in the country and in 1970 constituted the group most aware of its Honduran nationality.

The *ladino* population, spread throughout the country, is concentrated in the western and southern highlands, in a broad area around Tegucigalpa, the national capital and former center of colonial culture. In most other areas they live in close proximity to other groups—for example, Indians in the southwest and Antillean Blacks and Indians on the north coast.

Indians

When the Spaniards arrived, they encountered many Indian tribes; the strongest and most numerous were the Lenca, who occupied much of the central and southwest territory, extending into El Salvador.

Two general groupings were present at the time of the conquest; each comprised numerous Indian tribes. The settled agricultural peoples, including the Lenca and groups related to the Maya of Guatemala, inhabited the southwest and western highlands. Seminomadic peoples, who depended primarily on hunting and fishing and only secondarily on agriculture for their livelihood, inhabited parts of the central highlands and the northern lowlands; their culture was related to that of the South American rain forest peoples. Moreover, the north coastal area came under English influence early and remained remote from Honduran government control until the mid-nineteenth century. Some of the settled highland agricultural peoples were the ones with whom the Spanish made contact and who contributed to the present *ladino* culture. Their culture was more advanced than that of the lowlands, and the people were less isolated and, for the most part, more amenable to acculturation.

For these reasons official government policy toward the two groups has been different since independence. The Indians of the southwest were treated more liberally than those of the northern lowlands; with some notable exceptions, no special separate laws were designed to govern them. These Indians, in contact with *ladinos*, were subject to acculturating processes. The Indians still remaining in the southwest, though more numerous than those of the northern lowlands, are subject to continual erosion of what little remains of their traditional culture.

The so-called Forest Indians of the northern lowlands, on the other hand, were subject to a more aggressive program, particularly after control of the area was relinquished by the English in 1860. The clergy played an important role in establishing schools and permanent settlements among these seminomadic peoples in addition to converting them to Catholicism. This policy was particularly successful among the Jicaque Indians of the department of Yoro, most of whom were to a great degree absorbed into *ladino* culture. A small band of them retreated into the highlands, however, where they have maintained many of their traditions.

The Lenca

In the 1960s the Lenca constituted about 70 percent of all the Indians in the country. They were concentrated in the mountainous region of the southwest in the departments of Intibucá (the only department in which Indians constituted a majority of the population in the early 1960s), La Paz and, to a lesser extend, Lempira. When the Spaniards arrived, they were also found farther north in what is now Francisco Morazán, but these inhabitants either contributed to the *ladino* culture of Honduras by mixing with the Spaniards or retreated to the southwest. The origins of Lenca culture are somewhat uncertain; some scholars hypothesized that they were of South American origin. Nevertheless, Middle American influences had affected the Lenca area by the time of the conquest, and they were culturally similar to the Maya.

In the 1960s they were a modified Indian group; that is, the traits that served to distinguish them from their *ladino* neighbors were important, but their similarities were many. They were not unified as a group, however; municipal cultures had developed since the conquest, and each had its own amalgam of traits. Lenca migrations to the banana plantations of the north coast, to the coffee areas, and to the mines are common. Moreover, the Lenca are in constant contact with the *ladinos* who live among them, and they are changing as a result.

Certain aspects of their economy served to separate the Lenca from their *ladino* neighbors. Most of the Lenca lands were owned by the community; their distribution varied from municipality to municipality. Such lands were often parceled out for lifetime use to individuals who were, in effect, owners although they held no formal titles (see ch. 8, The Economy). Sometimes, as in the case of the municipality of Guajiquiro, the land was worked in true communal fashion. This system was introduced by the Spanish but taken over by Indians, as was the case with many aspects of Spanish culture.

In the 1960s exchange labor between Lenca men was common. Most Lenca used the digging stick to sow seed, a practice not common among *ladinos*, who have adopted the plow and other more sophisticated agricultural techniques. Moreover, Lenca women work in the fields, uncommon among *ladinos*. The Lenca grow corn, wheat, plantains, and beans, among other crops. Traditional taboos are practiced at various times in the agricultural cycle.

The Lenca have retained handicraft industries and depend on regional and local markets throughout their area for distribution and acquisition of goods. The production of nets, baskets, and pottery is still important; the spinning and weaving of cloth have disappeared, though women still make by hand their characteristic costume, an adaptation of nineteenth-century colonial style dress, consisting of a wide skirt and loose blouse. Most towns that had markets held them on Thursdays and Sundays; some attracted only local people, whereas others were attended by traders from throughout the Lenca area and from El Salvador. Most of the Lenca traveled on foot and carried their produce on their backs; the topography may have prevented their adopting more modern methods, the southwest highlands being the highest and most rugged in the country.

Some towns retained an only slightly changed form of their ancient political organization and had in them certain vestiges of the ancient tribal organizations; in some towns as late as the 1960s, the headman inherited his office. In most towns, however, the setup was much the same as in *ladino* towns; persons were elected by the local population to positions that were comparable to those in *ladino* towns, including a mayor, councilmen, and others (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics). Nevertheless, there was evidence that in some towns a group of village elders in consultation with a few other men of the municipality actually chose the officials, and their choices were merely confirmed in the election.

The Lenca are Catholic, although they have retained many of their aboriginal beliefs in syncretic form with Catholicism. The religious and political organizations in Lenca municipalities were kept separate, a situation patterned on that of the *ladino*. The *ladino* and Indian religious organizations were similar, although they were kept separate. In Intibucá religious brotherhoods were responsible for raising money to pay for their respective fiestas and to guard religious property; reliable information was not available for other towns.

The fiestas are an important part of the town's activities; most important is the fiesta of the town's patron saint. In Intibucá this fiesta for the Virgen de la Candelaria lasts for nine days in February. An unusual ceremony was an integral part of this fiesta. The town was visited by the patron saint of Yamaringuila, a neighboring town. In turn, the patron saint of Intibucá visited Yamaringuila during its patron saint's day in December. *Guancasco* is the term for this reciprocal visiting of patron saints, which is carried out between other towns in Honduras. Religious ritual also accompanies the crucial activities of the agriculturally oriented lives of the Lenca, such as the planting and the harvest. At such times much *chicha* (an alcoholic beverage) is drunk; copal incense is burned; offerings are sometimes made to the sun, which is revered among the Lenca as a powerful life force; and dances are performed.

The social structure and family life were similar to those of *ladinos*, with important exceptions. In most Lenca towns the people were divided into an upper and a lower class, the upper class being composed of the village headman, his family, and the elders. Marriages were most often arranged by the parents, though the couple would not be forced into an unwanted union. A period of trial marriage in the home of the girl's parents sometimes preceded the actual marriage. Most newly married couples established residences apart from their parents, although it was not uncommon for them to move in temporarily with either the girl's or the boy's family. Men were permitted to have more than one wife, and polygyny was not uncommon.

The Acculturated Indians of Santa Barbara and El Paraiso

In the early 1960s in the departments of Santa Bárbara and El Paraíso there existed numerous pockets of highly acculturated Indians who retained only a few distinct traits, but these were sufficient to set them somewhat apart from the *ladinos* even though many of their members were racially *mestizos*. The antecedents of the two groups are uncertain; no Indian languages were spoken in either area. The Indians of Santa Bárbara are probably descendants of the Lenca, although they may be related to the neighboring Jicaque or Chorti. The Indians of El Paraíso are probably descendants of the Matagalpa.

The Indians of Santa Bárbara lived in the east-central part of the department, most of them in municipalities located along two tributaries of the Ulúa River. In the early 1960s the largest group of these Indians was found in the municipality of Llama, but their numbers there probably did not exceed 2,800. Unlike most Indian areas, this one was not located in an isolated area. On the contrary, it was located along one of the country's main transportation routes, between San Pedro Sula and the department capital of Santa Bárbara, that is, in turn, connected by major roads with Tegucigalpa (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions).

It was considered unusual that Indians in such an area had not been completely absorbed into *ladino* culture and had retained remnants of their Indian culture. Most of their lands were community owned, although they were usually worked as if they were privately owned; the worker could even rent out his plot if he so desired. Exchange labor was common in some areas. Most of these Indians used horses and mules for carrying goods. The Indian men's dress was indistinguishable from that of the *ladinos*, but Indian women still wore the wide skirt patterned after Spanish colonial dress. A *guancasco* was carried out between two of the towns, though it varied somewhat from the one held in the Lenca area.

The Indians of El Paraíso were situated in the southwest corner of that department along the border with Nicaragua in a rough highland area accessible only by traveling on foot or horseback. Many of the people are racially *mestizo* though they are culturally Indian. Two of the four principal Indian municipalities of the area retain the customs of *guancasco* and communal landownership.

Other Indians of the West

Two modified Indian groups whose cultures were similar to those of the Lenca lived in the western part of the country. The larger group was the Chorti, numbering several thousand in the early 1960s and inhabiting the forest-covered hills of western Copán Department. They are part of a larger Chorti group that lived in the adjacent department of Chiquimula in Guatemala. The Honduran Chorti are descendants of the Maya Indians who long ago moved into the area from Guatemala. Ruins of one of the greatest centers of the ancient lowland Maya culture are found in this area (see ch. 7, Education, Culture, and Information).

A small isolated group of Pipil Indians was still intact in the municipality of Dolores in Ocotepeque Department on the border with El Salvador; most of the remaining Pipil inhabit the southwest highlands of that country where they constitute the major Indian group. The Pipil are of Mexican origin. They arrived in El Salvador and Honduras sometime after the eleventh century when they were driven out of Mexico by wars that broke up the Toltec Empire there.

The Jicaque of Yoro and the Montana de la Flor

The origins of the Jicaque Indians are not clear. For many years their language was regarded as an isolated one or one related to Chibchan, spoken in northern South America. In the mid-1950s, on the basis of further research, other scholars classified it as belonging to the Hokan-Siouan language group, primarily spoken by Indians of Mexico and the United States.

In the eighteenth century Christianizing missions were established in the territory of the Jicaque (or the Torrupán, as they are also sometimes called), which extended along the north coast from the Aguán River westward to the Sierra de Omoa and inland to the Lenca territory (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions). The coastal lands of the Jicaque were taken from them when the Black Caribs settled there in the nineteenth century and the Jicaque retreated to the southern part of what is now the department of Yoro.

The absorption of the Jicaque was advanced by the efforts of Father Manuel Jesus de Subirana in the nineteenth century, who gained their confidence, collected them from their scattered settlements into villages, and introduced them to corn agriculture. Their new concentration in the villages, however, made them easy prey to the government's demand for forced labor. Those few who did not become Hispanicized under these influences retreated westward into the highlands in the 1860s and established a remnant colony in the region of Montaña de la Flor, which still existed in the 1960s.

By that time the Jicaque of Yoro, much more numerous than those of Montaña de la Flor, had been almost completely absorbed in *ladino* culture. Most were bilingual in Spanish and Jicaque. In most other respects, they were culturally similar to poor *ladinos* of the area.

The roughly 300 Jicaque who inhabited a 1,900-acre reservation in Montaña de la Flor had few contacts with outsiders and retained a distinctive culture. Most of them spoke only their own language and were descended from the heads of two families that had formed the original colony. Their ruler was an elder who had been appointed by the previous ruler and who had the power to choose his own successor. As a concession to government authorities there was also a mayor with aides, but their power actually was minimal.

Families lived in scattered dwellings, made of planks tied together with vines and roofed with palm leaves. Each household maintained its own garden; various tubers, including *yuca* (starchy root,) potatoes, taro, and yams, were the principal crops grown and constituted the main food staples. Agriculture was supplemented by hunting small game; the preferred weapon was the blowgun loaded with clay pellets. Bows and arrows and traps were also used. Corn and coffee were grown as cash crops on community-worked fields. Group labor for tree cutting, housebuilding, communal planting, and the maintenance of the two roads leading to the reservation was customary.

Some of the religious beliefs showed elements taken from Catholicism probably learned before the migration to the Montaña de la Flor. Priests were not allowed on the reservation, however, and baptism was prohibited. These Jicaque believed the sun to be the Supreme Being and feared an evil female goddess named Tsii. The dead were wrapped in bark cloth and buried in an enclosed cemetery. At the foot of some graves crosses were implanted. On top of each grave was a clay pot with a hole in it that, the people believed, permitted the dead to see the sun.

Polygyny was permited but, because of a shortage of women, was uncommon. Marriages were prearranged at birth, and the girls went to live with their husbands when very young, sometimes under eleven years of age.

Folk remedies for illnesses were the common property of the people; there were no medicine men who had sole access to cures. A form of divination was also common property, by which all manner of things could be ascertained.

Both men and women wore distinctive costumes, although some men dressed in the manner of *ladinos*. The women wore either a long wrapped piece of cloth tucked in at the waist or a blouse and wide skirt, as was worn in colonial times by Spaniards. Men wore a bark cloth or cotton tunic tied at the waist and reaching below the knee.

Lowland Indians of the Northeast: Miskito, Sumo, and Paya

The northeast lowlands, called the Mosquitia, have always been sparsely populated. Small groups of Indians who had relatively few contacts with other peoples populated the area in the 1960s. The Miskito and Sumo Indians inhabited parts of the departments of Colón and Gracias a Dios, the Miskito living nearer to the coast and the Sumo living farther up the rivers of the area that drain into the Caribbean. The Miskito, who may at one time have been a subtribe of the Sumo, showed some Negro traits. In the 1960s these two groups together numbered several thousand. In the mid-1950s the Paya, who inhabited the river towns of Dulce Nombre de Culmí and Santa María del Carbón in the department of Olancho, numbered only a few hundred.

Like the tropical forest people of South America, they lived seminomadic lives in the lowlands where they cultivated tubers and spoke languages related to those of northern South America; the language of the Paya had not been definitely classified by 1960 as had the others, but it was thought to lean toward the same linguistic affiliation.

Before European contact the lowland peoples lived as small, separate groupings, only sometimes sharing a common dialect. They were constantly at war with one another. The Miskito were not a cohesive people before the conquest. The Spanish were not much interested in the Mosquitia because of the climate and the absence of precious metals, although it was considered part of crown property. The British were interested in establishing trading contacts in the area and, to rationalize their dealings with the coastal peoples that were considered illegal by the Spanish, they created a Miskito king in 1687 who applied for British protection.

The Miskito were armed by the British, and as a result other Indian groups, including the Sumo and the Paya, retreated into the interior. The Miskito, unlike the Sumo, intermarried with Negroes from a wrecked slave ship in the seventeenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century, a leader known as General ruled the Miskito, the Sumo, and the Paya, his authority having been bestowed by the British.

The Miskito served as middlemen in the illegal trade being carried out between the British and the Spanish settlers and the interior Indians. The British traded such things as cloth, machetes, and other European manufactures for the tortoise shell, animal skins, canoes, and forest products of the Miskito, Sumo, and Paya. The Miskito often raided the territories of the interior to acquire goods of trade.

The trade relationship gradually declined after 1860 when the British relinquished claims to territory in the Mosquitia. Nevertheless, tribes in the area maintained trading contacts with one another. In the 1960s, however, this Indian area was in economic depression because of the few trade and labor opportunities available.

The cultures of the groups were similar in the mid-twentieth century. All of them lived along rivers or on the ocean, using dugout canoes and rafts on the rivers and large canoes at sea. Miskito communities were usually populated by 100 to 500 people; Sumo villages were smaller, and Paya villages, even smaller.

All practiced slash-and-burn agriculture. Their principal food crops included sweet and bitter manioc (the bitter variety probably introduced by the Carib Indians) and plantains. The men cleared the lands while the women did the planting, cultivating, and harvesting. Men did all the hunting; their weapons included bows and arrows, blowguns, and guns. Both men and women fished, which was important among those people who lived on the water. Fish were taken either by spear or by poisoning the water. Handcrafting still played a part in the local economy. Wicker baskets, bark cloth (made by pounding the bark of a particular tree to make it soft), cotton fabric into which feathers were sometimes incorporated, pottery, and other items were produced.

European styles of clothing were slowly being adopted, particularly among the men. Most men, however, wore a breechclout and poncho tied under the arms and belted, while the women wore a knee-length wraparound skirt of bark cloth.

All three groups believed in a remote deity who had little control over events on earth and in numerous other spirits that inhabited caves, ponds, and hills and who were responsible for the many misfortunes that men suffered. It was the duty of the shamans, who had special powers, to placate these demons. It was also their duty to cure the sick.

Polygamy was practiced, particularly among the leaders and shamans. Young persons generally chose their own marriage partners, although on occasion the girl's parents arranged for the marriage without her consent. Marriage between certain cousins was common. The bridegroom had to pay the bride's family an agreed price before the ceremony. A man could abandon a woman who was barren. Divorce could be arranged by making payments to the offended person's family.

Black Caribs

The Black Caribs (sometimes called Garif or Morenos), who were of mixed origins, live along the north coast, from about Trujillo west to La Ceiba and in parts of the Bay Islands. In the late 1950s their numbers were estimated to be about 12,000, and presumably there were more by 1970. They are descendants of runaway African slaves who intermarried with the Carib Indians of Saint Vincent Island, one of the Windward Islands in the Antilles.

In 1796 the English deported the Black Caribs from Saint Vincent to Roatán, one of the Bay Islands. The Spanish invited the Black Caribs to move to the mainland. Most of them, along with some other Antillean Blacks, made the move and were eventually converted to Catholicism.

Some Black Caribs work for wages on the docks, as seamen on modern ships, and on the plantations. Others live in small villages and practice a subsistence slash-and-burn agriculture. The women do much of the planting, cultivating, and harvesting. Crops grown include bitter *yuca*, sweet potatoes, taro, plantains, and pineapples. The vegetable diet is supplemented by fish and shellfish caught by the men. The men also build dugout canoes and plank vessels, used for transportation along the coast.

The Black Carib are Catholic but retain elements of an aboriginal religion. Each community holds a fiesta for its patron saint. Two specifically Black Carib celebrations were held on Christmas and New Year's Day. The *jugujugu*, performed on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, is a dance in which men and women dance separately all night. The *yancunu*, danced on Christmas and New Year's Day, is performed by men wearing masks. Black Carib music is reminiscent of that played in West Africa, but the dance steps, done in a circle, recall those of the South American rain forest Indians.

Many of the Black Carib rituals revolved around deceased ancestors. Spirits of the dead were considered very powerful, capable of helping or hindering in curing the sick. Two kinds of sickness were thought to exist: that brought on by dead ancestors and that induced by evil spirits. Much attention was given to propitiating spirits. Shamans also produced cures with their herb medicines and special powers.

Polygyny was practiced, and it was not uncommon for a man to have wives in separate villages. The man was responsible for providing fish and a house for each wife. Housebuilding was usually a community affair.

Bay Islanders and Other Groups

The population of the Bay Islands in the 1960s was much more akin to that of other Antillean islands than to that of the Central American mainland (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). English-speaking whites and Negroes who arrived in the 1830s, primarily from British Honduras and the island of Grand Cayman and from other islands in the Antilles, constituted nearly all the population of this department, although there are pockets of Black Carib left on the island of Roatán.

Ladinos and teachers from the interior have moved to the area, but they have effected few cultural changes. The Bay Islanders, Protestant and English-speaking, remained oriented to the different culture of the Antilles.

The population of the islands was about 9,800 in 1969, about 80 percent of whom were Negroes. Negroes and whites lived in separate communities and rarely intermarried. The main Negro settlements were found on the island of Roatán; the capital of the department was the town of Roatán and was predominantly Negro. Red-roofed white houses built on stilts over the water extended into the harbor. Other towns on the island had white and mixed populations. Most towns were dominated by white churches with single spires. The island of Utila was predominantly white, whereas Guanaja, the most sparsely settled of the three, was mixed and had more Spanish-speaking than English-speaking inhabitants.

Some Bay Islanders were financially dependent on gathering coconuts, which they dried and converted into copra for sale on the mainland. Many of the uninhabited cays were planted in coconuts. Subsistence agriculture was also significant; agricultural tools were simple, and corn, beans, pumpkins, potatoes, and taro were grown. Nevertheless, little of the land of the islands was under cultivation, and the islanders depended on purchases from the mainland.

Fishing, however, was the most important economic activity for the islanders, who sold most of their catch on the mainland. Fishermen usually went out in the early morning and returned by early afternoon; the caught fish were penned until the next morning when they were killed, cleaned, and sent to the mainland, usually to the town of La Ceiba, for sale.

The Protestant church, primarily the Methodist denomination, and the institution of the family exerted strong moral influence over the islanders. Both men and women attended church (see ch. 5, Social Structure, Family, and Religion). Weddings and Christmas season activities constituted the most important celebrations.

The political system was completely Honduran in structure and the setup was essentially the same as in mainland towns. Officials in the departmental government in Roatán were appointed by the central government in Tegucigalpa. Municipal officials were elected.

Other Groups

In the early years of the twentieth century, many of the Negro settlers of the Bay Islands, along with other Negro emigrants from English areas, such as British Honduras, the Cayman Islands, and Jamaica, moved to the mainland, attracted by work opportunities on the newly opened banana plantations and in the port towns that served them. Many of them, particularly the new arrivals, spoke English; except for their involvement in the north coast banana economy, their culture was, not surprisingly, similar to that of the Bay Islanders. Nevertheless, some came under the influence of the interior *ladinos* who have also moved into the area. Because of their closer contacts with the mainstream of Honduran life, they were fast becoming acculturated.

Another group that has played a distinctive role in the amalgam of peoples called Turcos (Turks) or Sirios (Syrians), which also includes other persons of eastern Mediterranean origin and Jews. The first of these people began to arrive in the country after 1910, and they and their descendants have played a significant role in commerce and small industry. They have usually kept somewhat aloof from *ladino* culture, retaining vestiges from their homelands. There is evidence, however, that their sons and daughters were not following in their footsteps but were becoming acculturated.

LANGUAGES

Spanish is the official language and is spoken by most of the population. It is the language of the government, schools, newspapers, and radio. Many of the Indians, particularly those in the departments of Santa Bárbara and El Paraíso, speak only Spanish.

Spanish was introduced by the conquerors in the sixteenth century and was perpetuated by their descendants and other colonists. Because it was the language of the dominant group, those who wished to benefit from association with the Spaniards and the *ladinos* had to learn it.

Nevertheless, even in the 1960s a number of other languages continued to be spoken. Estimates were not available for the number of speakers of these other languages.

English was spoken by the Bay Islanders, few of whom spoke any other language, even though Spanish was required in the schools. English was also spoken by the Negroes from various Caribbean islands who worked on the north coast plantations and in the port towns, although they were often bilingual in Spanish if they had been there for some time. Some of the Black Caribs were trilingual, speaking English as a third language after their Carib language and Spanish.

Because the country lies in the area of contact between Middle and South American cultures, the languages spoken by the indigenous peoples represent both areas. Many are dying out. The Lenca language had not in the 1960s yet been definitely classified with relation to other languages; its origins were obscure, but it was thought to belong to the Chibchan group of South American origin. The Jicaque language (although it had been related to South American languages) was part of the Hokan-Siouan language group, of North American affinity, and most prevalent among tribes in the United States. The Chorti language belongs to the Mayan stock and is related to many of the indigenous languages of Guatemala. Pipil, though no longer spoken in Honduras, belongs to the Aztecoid subfamily and is related to many Mexican languages.

Languages belonging to two South American language groups were still spoken in the 1960s. Carib, spoken by the Black Carib, belongs to the Ge-Pano-Carib group and has borrowed many terms from French, English, and Spanish. Men and women have different vocabularies and at one time spoke different languages, though they now understand one another's vocabularies. This is owing to the fact that historically many of the women were Arawakanian slaves and did not know the Carib language. The Miskito and Sumo languages (and perhaps also the Paya, although its origins are uncertain) belong to the Macro-Chibchan group. There are several mutually intelligible dialects of Miskito. The Sumo dialects, on the other hand, are often not mutually intelligible.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL STRUCTURE, FAMILY, AND RELIGION

Society was in 1970 a mixture of Hispanic and Indian traditions, tempered on the north coast by influences from the British Antilles and in the large cities by contemporary urban values. The mixture took different forms in different parts of the country and among different groups of the population. It covered a wide spectrum from the newly acculturated Indian to the direct descendant of the Conquistadores, both of whom still reflect their heritage to a great degree. These, however, were only variants of the same norm rather than different norms existing side by side.

The family is the basic social unit and serves to integrate the individual into society. Lineage and kinship, although less important than in the past, still play a significant role in determining the individual's place in society. Kinship ties are strong, and the rights and obligations of kinship are reflected in the economic and political life of the country. Nepotism, far from being castigated, is a desired outgrowth of kinship responsibilities.

Family structure is authoritarian, and the father is the complete head and source of authority. This pattern, however, is slowly changing; women are playing a greater role, and children, particularly girls, are being allowed greater freedom. Male dominance, however, is a basic value of the society, which will continue to be reflected in family life.

The social structure has been in a state of flux in the twentieth century with the gradual emergence of a middle class and with changing criteria for class membership. Although society has always been stratified, the structure was never rigid or closed. Upward mobility was possible through the acquisition of wealth and through marriage. Emphasis on wealth as a criterion for social classification is increasingly replacing the former importance of lineage. The increased emphasis on wealth has resulted in a widening of the economic gap between the classes despite growth of the middle class. Membership in the middle class is based on literacy and educational qualifications rather than on income, and the group represents both extremes of the economic scale.

The majority of the population profess the Roman Catholic faith, although they are not strict in their formal religious practice.

Church and state had been separated since 1880 and have been quite aloof from each other. Religious freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution, and religious tolerance is widespread. A large number of Protestant denominations have missions in the country. The number of Protestants, although growing rapidly, made up less than 10 percent of the population in 1970.

The social values have evolved primarily from the Hispanic experience in the New World and are similar to those of the rest of Latin America. Major emphasis is placed on the inner worth of the individual, who is regarded as a unique being. He occupies a place in a stratified society, but this does not compromise the infinite value of his soul. Within this value system, the individual is more important than society, whose rules and regulations he is not necessarily bound to obey.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The structure of society in 1970 was undergoing a slow but steady change with the development of a middle class that was becoming increasingly class conscious and with changing criteria for determining class membership. Although landownership and family lineage still played an important role in determining social status, education and wealth in general have become equally as significant.

In a cultural survey conducted in Honduras in the 1950s, Richard Adams identified four distinct social classes among the *ladinos* (see Glossary), who constituted 90 percent of the population. In addition, he identified five sociocultural groups that stood outside this class structure but were part of the total social structure in any given community. *Ladino* society was divided into a cosmopolitan (urban) upper class, local upper class, local middle class, and lower class. In a given community, however, only two or three of the classes could be found. The five sociocultural groups identified by Adams were the Indians of the interior and the northeast region, the Black Caribs of the north coast, the Antillean whites of the Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía), the Antillean Negroes of the north coast, and persons of European extraction. Their social structure follows the *ladino* model, although some groups have retained elements of their traditional social structure to varying degrees (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

Criteria determining class membership include landownership, income, occupation, education, and family lineage. An individual's position in a community depends on his own qualifications and those of the other members of the community. A schoolteacher's education or the amount of a merchant's wealth may place him in the upper class in a rural village but only in the middle class in a large town or city. Membership in a given class carries with it certain requirements of behavior in terms of moral conduct, place of residence, membership in organizations, and occupational preference. Because they are class conscious, *ladinos* are generally carefull to fulfill these requirements.

Despite its class consciousness, *ladino* society is open and allows mobility. Social status may be improved by increasing one's income or education and then following the required life style of the higher social position. The improved status usually is not solidified, however, until a bond is established through marriage or godfatherhood, one of the respective families being in the higher social position.

Upper Class

At the top of the social scale are the old families, usually referred to as *la primera* (the leaders) or *la sociedad* (the society), whose wealth is based on landownership or, more recently, on commerce or industry. These are the families that have traditionally provided the leadership of the country, especially in the political sphere.

A small group within the upper class may be considered as the cosmopolitan upper class, as distinct from the local, or provincial, upper class. The former, sometimes called *la capitalista* (the capitalist), is found mainly in Tegucigalpa. Its members prefer to live in the hub of social, economic, and political activity in which they are actively engaged. Their orientation is worldwide; they frequently travel widely and send their children to schools abroad. Many of them have country residences in or near provincial centers where they spend various periods of time, but they seldom participate in the local social or political life.

The bulk of the upper class may be found in the provincial centers. It consists of local families that are old, respected, and wealthy by local standards. They usually live in the center of town and dominate local social, economic, and political life. They have traditionally formed the political and administrative structures of the country. The orientation of the provincial upper class is local and national, but it seldom goes beyond the borders of Honduras. Its life style is conservative. Frequently referred to locally as *los educados* (the educated ones), the families place high value on education. If local schools are inadequate, they send their children to Tegucigalpa for a secondary and, if possible, a higher education. They also play an important role in the financial support of local schools.

Because of the traditionalism of the local upper class, lineage plays an important part in status within the class. So-called good old families whose line can be traced to colonial days hold a superior position even if their wealth is less than that of others. They do not, however, form a closed aristocracy but freely admit members of lesser lineage into their ranks, usually through marriage. The local upper class as a whole is also open to new members but tends to retain the custom of endogamy which, in some places, has resulted in a great deal of intermarriage. Access to the class is through wealth and education, and only after access has been obtained can it be solidified through marriage.

Middle Class

An amorphous middle group has always been present in Honduran society. Its composition has varied, depending on the nature of the upper and lower groups. Usually it included those people whose wealth or education put them above the lowest class but not high enough to be in the upper, or the people whose wealth and education might put them in the upper class but who lacked the lineage or social graces to be accepted by the upper group in their community. These were the merchants, technicians, schoolteachers, and government officials.

In recent years, however, the spread of education and economic development have given rise to an urban middle class conscious of its role and power. It is based more on education than on income and includes a wide spectrum of persons, from the skilled worker and technician to the doctor, lawyer, or university professor whose wealth or family background does not qualify him for the upper class.

In 1970 the traditional middle group and the newer urban middle class were showing signs of merging into a cohesive, potentially influential middle class. Most of the momentum and leadership was coming from the urban group, but even members of the provincial middle segment of society have shown class consciousness by forming clubs and social organizations through which they sometimes take over some of the community functions formerly reserved for the upper class. In many towns the middle class is more involved in local affairs and charitable work than is the upper class.

Despite their great differences in economic standing and level of education, members of the middle class have several common characteristics. They are all set apart from the lower class by their disdain for manual labor and for anyone who engages in it, as well as by their literacy. At the same time, they are distinguished from the upper class by their lack of any claim to power stemming from their wealth or distinguished ancestry. Their self-consciousness as a group is expressed in pride over what they consider their common assets—respectability, morality, a desire for education, and religious devotion. They strive for a life style that includes the wearing of modern clothing of acceptable style and presentable condition as opposed to traditional Indian clothing or workmen's dress; living in a well-constructed house whose furnishings show a degree of sophistication as opposed to dwellings with mud floors and crude peasant furnishings; and following a strict code of behavior that does not allow for any of the excesses or indulgences of the very poor or the very rich. Although many in the upper middle class economic brackets try to emulate the life style of the upper class, most members of the middle class generally criticize the wealthier for their emphasis on money and their less strict morality.

Lower Class

The lower class is by far the largest social class in the country. It includes small landowners, tenant farmers, squatters, and laborers of various kinds. It also includes recently acculturated Indians and *ladinos* of recent Indian origin. Within the group in some communities, distinction in gradation is made according to wealth, occupation, or degree of cultural integration. Where there is a sizable Indian population whose culture remains distinct from that of the rest of the population, the Indians form a separate sociocultural group outside the local social structure. Recently acculturated Indians usually form the lowest level in the social structure, not so much because they are Indians but because of their extreme poverty.

Most members of the lower class are engaged in subsistence agriculture, either on their own land or as tenants or renters of land. A rapidly growing number of lower class persons, however, are abandoning agriculture for wage labor on the banana and coffee plantations or for industry and handicrafts in the nearest town (see ch. 8, The Economy). Regardless of his occupation, the lower class individual is generally distinguished by his poverty and lack of education. Even where schools are available, low-class families cannot afford to lose the productive efforts of their children in order to send them to school. In addition, many of them cannot see the benefits of an education in terms of providing more food and a better life for the family and therefore consider school a waste of time.

In their relations with the upper classes, the members of the lower class are respectful but exhibit a quiet pride and independence. Adams found in his survey that they do not have the subservient attitude of lower class individuals in other parts of Central America. The upper and middle classes look down on the lower class and are patronizing in their relations with lower class individuals, but the lower class person does not respond with submissiveness.

FAMILY

The family is the basic unit of social organization. It is the source of identification and status for the individual, establishing his position within the community, and is the principal agent of socialization for the young. Family heritage, although less important in

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1970 than in the past, still played a significant role in the life of the individual and of society. Personal status was equated with family reputation, and the son inherited the prestige and social position of his father. Women retained their maiden names after marriage, and children carried both the father's and mother's surnames. As a consequence, Hondurans attach great importance to lineage and genealogy and fiercely defend their family honor against any insult or slight.

Family and Kinship

Under the frontier conditions of colonial and early independence days, kinship was extremely important. Large extended families lived together, intermarried, and formed an economic and social front to the rest of society. Economic and social changes in recent years have weakened the kinship bond, and in 1970 the nuclear family was the focus of family life. Nevertheless, family ties were still strong, and heritage remained a source of status and prestige for the individual. Some upper class families proudly trace their ancestry to the early Spanish settlers and, even among the lower classes, lineage is known for several generations back.

Kin group identification generally extends to second or third cousins. More distant relationships may be recognized but are not considered important. In stable communities relatives regularly visit one another, join in the festivities incumbent on various religious holidays or special family events, and are expected to offer assistance in times of need. Even in loosely knit families that gather infrequently, members are expected to help one another. When looking for employment, an individual can always count on favored treatment from his kin group. Likewise, anyone who achieves financial or political success is expected to include his relatives in his good fortune.

Increasing geographic mobility of the population in search of employment is weakening or even breaking traditional kinship patterns. Relatives beyond the nuclear family are frequently too far away to maintain contact with it, and consequently the feeling of duty to it is weakened. In such situations functions of the kin group are taken over by close friends or by social organizations, such as labor unions or church groups.

In addition to natural kinship, there exists a form of ritual kinship known as *compadrazgo*, or godparenthood, among all segments of the population except the Antillean whites of the Bay Islands. Godparents are chosen at baptism, confirmation, and marriage, but the most important ones are the baptismal godparents. The same individual frequently serves as godparent at all three events. Originally, godparents served only a religious function—they were formal witnesses to an individual's partaking of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and marriage. As such they assumed the responsibility to supervise and guide their charge's religious education and moral conduct. Later, however, the function of godparents was expanded into what amounted to being a second set of parents, with all the rights and obligations of the natural parents.

In traditional practice godparents, once they accepted their trust, became members of their charge's family. The charge, in turn, became a member of the godparent's family. The bond thus formed between the two families carried with it all the rights and obligations of kinship. The choice of godparents, therefore, was very carefully considered. Most frequently they were chosen from among close friends of the family, sometimes from among members of the family itself. Poor families frequently chose as godparents for their children persons of higher economic or social status, such as a family member's employer, in order to give the child advantages that the natural family could not provide. Among all social strata it is not uncommon to use the *compadrazgo* relationship to enhance one's social status.

There was some evidence in 1970 that the role of godparents in urban areas was becoming more ceremonial than real. In rural areas, however, the system still functions, establishing a set of intimate friends who will provide assistance and loyalty when needed and who perform the role of surrogate family.

Size and Composition

According to social studies of the country, the nuclear family, composed of the father, mother, and unmarried children is prevalent. Upon marriage, a couple set up their own household unless they are financially unable to do so, in which case they live with the husband's parents until they are able to establish their own home. Only among the Black Caribs is it customary for a young couple to live with the girl's parents for a short time after marriage. Extended family households, therefore, are a matter of necessity rather than choice. Nevertheless, 1961 census figures indicate that 15 percent of the households included three generations under the same roof, the oldest man acting as head of the household.

Aged or widowed parents sometimes live with the family of one of their children, or, for a variety of reasons, other persons may live with the family of one of their relatives. In such cases, however, the head of the central family is head of the whole household, regardless of his age.

Great value is placed on children not only as an economic asset in rural areas but also as a matter of prestige. Families in both rural and urban areas tend to be large, usually including four or more children. Barrenness is pitied, and small families are criticized. Nevertheless, there seemed to be some concern in 1970 about the rapid growth of the population, which is hampering economic development. The concept of family planning, therefore, although not officially endorsed by the government was receiving tacit approval. Family-planning clinics were functioning in all parts of the country. They were financed and assisted by the Planned Parenthood Federation, a private United States organization. Its campaign, apparently aimed at the younger generations through the schools, has had sufficient success to alarm Roman Catholic Church authorities in the country, who are opposed to family planning by artificial means.

Functions

The family fulfills a number of important functions. It is the smallest unit of social organization, giving the individual a source of identification and establishing his position and role in society. As such, the family is the principal agent of socialization. Within its framework, children learn the precepts and values of their society and the behavior necessary to preserve and further them.

Some of the burden of socialization is absorbed by the school and the church, but these institutions are not well developed in rural areas. The rural family, therefore, plays a greater role in the socialization process than does the urban family. The urban family, on the other hand, is an important stabilizing factor in a rapidly changing environment full of pressures and often conflicting ideas.

In addition to its social function, the family frequently has an economic function. The rural family is the basic production unit. Each member has a specified role, and even young children are expected to perform certain tasks. Everyone works for the maintenance of the family; even income earned individually by a member of the family is used to benefit the whole household. This is true also for many urban families who operate a small business as a family enterprise. Larger businesses are frequently run on an extended family basis, the head of the family acting as head of the business and other members filling all the positions of authority.

The family is also the center of much of the religious activity, particularly in rural areas without a church or a priest. Daily prayer sessions in which the family participates as a unit are common practice, as are family *novenas* (nine days of prayer), and other rituals in memory of the dead, in honor of the patron saint, or for a variety of other reasons.

In the past the family also served as the central unit for recreational activity. Evenings were spent together playing cards or other games, talking, or making music. On Sundays and holidays the whole family would visit friends, walk in the town, or participate in some other recreational activity. This tradition has largely disappeared. Films, clubs, and other public activities have taken over family-based recreation. Although Sunday still seems to be a day when the family spends at least part of the day together, at other times the various members are likely to scatter in different directions.

Marriage

Honduran law recognizes both formal marriage and common law unions. Formal marriage is enacted in a municipality as a civil contract and most often is confirmed by a religious ceremony. Approximately half of the unions concluded each year in the country, however, are not formalized but are free unions based only on the consent of the individuals involved. The high percentage of free unions results partly from the unavailability of the necessary government official or priest in many rural areas, partly from the expense involved in formal marriage in the form of fees and costs of the incumbent celebrations, and partly from the choice of individuals who prefer to avoid the legal entanglements of formal marriage. Free unions tend to be stable but not as much as formal marriages. Children of such unions enjoy the same legal rights as those of formal unions. Free unions are frequently formalized at a later stage when it becomes feasible to do so.

In the past, marriages were planned by the family to seal an economic or social bond. Class endogamy was practiced when possible, particularly within the upper social strata. That, coupled with rural isolation, resulted in considerable intermarriage within a community. Most communities, however prohibited marriage between first cousins, and in some communities the prohibition was extended to children of godparents.

In 1970 planned marriages were rare. Unions were formed by individuals on the basis of love and compatibility. Ethnic and class endogamy was preferred, although crossing lines in order to enhance one's social status was not uncommon.

Courtship patterns have changed radically since the 1930s, when strict traditional customs still prevailed. In 1970 boys and girls met freely without chaperones but usually in groups. The formal, strictly supervised meetings for the purpose of courting had nearly disappeared. Relations between young people of different sexes were casual and frequent. They went to films, attended dances at their school or social club, and strolled in the town square listening to band music. In rural areas the freedom between the sexes was more restricted than in the cities, but strict chaperonage was rare. In small towns and villages where everyone knew everyone else, the whole population served as chaperon, and gossip provided effective social control.

Girls are considered marriageable once they reach the age of fifteen. The fifteenth birthday, therefore, is a milestone that is widely announced and celebrated with a party. The wealthy and prominent families give their daughters a formal coming-out party, which is announced in the newspapers. Those with lesser means may restrict the celebration to family and friends, but all social strata mark it in some fashion.

When a courtship reaches the point where the couple is considering marriage, the boy asks permission of the parents to court their daughter. This is a formality that allows the parents to pass judgment on the eligibility of the boy as a possible husband for their daughter, but few parents seriously consider withholding approval. Formal consent of the parents is asked again if the couple definitely decides to marry. At this point there is also a formal meeting of the two families.

Husbands are usually at least five years older than their wives. Almost half the girls married formally in 1965 were between fifteen and twenty years of age. The men covered a wider range of age—75 percent of them were between twenty and twenty-four. The marriage rate between 1960 and 1965 has been around 3 per 1,000 inhabitants.

Divorce is legal but the divorce rate is negligible. Social and religious pressures against it are very strong, and unhappy unions are almost never dissolved. Instead, a couple might separate or continue to live under the same roof but with the partners independent of each other. The independence may go as far as including a liaison with another person, particularly on the part of the men. Extramarital relations by men are not uncommon even when they are happily married and often cross class and ethnic lines. Children resulting from such relations are frequently taken into the father's household and raised as a member of the household, although not necessarily as a member of the family. A child whose parents are of different ethnic or social group assumes the identity of the parent who raises him.

Free unions break up more frequently than formal marriages since there are no legal, social, or religious pressures holding them together. A notable exception is found among Indians, where separations are very rare, although free unions are far more frequent than formal marriages.

Roles in Marriage

The Honduran family has traditionally been patriarchal, the father being the absolute head. The complete authority of the father is gradually weakening as the role of women is changing through better education and greater involvement in the world beyond the home. In 1970, however, the father was still the undisputed head of the family even though he was more willing than before to include his wife and children in the decision making process.

As head of the family, a man is responsible for providing the livelihood for the family and for protecting it from all adversities. He represents the family in the community. In exchange for these responsibilities the husband and father is owed respect and loyalty by his family. Even if decisions are made jointly, the man has the final word. His business life and much of his social life are conducted independently of the family and without consultation with them. He may even have extramarital affairs without public or private censure; the double standard in such matters is generally accepted by both sexes.

Domestic matters are the responsibility of the wife. The husband usually gives her an allowance for household expenses and metes out discipline to the children, but his involvement in household affairs does not go beyond that. The wife is the autonomous administrator of the household and is responsible for rearing the children. Just as the wife expects her husband to provide for the family and to protect it against the outside world, so the husband expects his wife to provide a comfortable and happy home to which he can retreat for comfort and where he can renew his strength in order to face the outside world. The wife's maternal role is much idealized, and unselfishness, self-sacrifice, and patience are often mentioned as her greatest virtues. This concept of wife and mother is weaker in poor lower or middle class homes where the wife plays a larger economic role and increasingly works outside the home to help support the family.

The role of the wife has changed considerably as she gained more independence under law and acquired more education. In 1970 women had the right to vote, could own property in their own name, and could enter into contracts without their husband's consent. Middle and upper class women were getting university educations and entering the world of business, the professions, and even politics. Several women's organizations were active in 1970 in promoting greater social and political involvement by women and in fighting for greater equality between women and men.

Tradition is still strong, however, and in many families the woman remains subservient to her husband. The center of her life is her home and children, and all other interests become secondary. Even if she worked before marriage, she is expected to relinquish her job afterward. To do otherwise would be a reflection on her husband's ability to support his family. Her social life is limited to church-sponsored activities and visits with women friends.

Childhood and Youth

Childhood is ideally supposed to be a carefree period filled with love and happiness. Inasmuch as they are financially able, therefore, most parents indulge their children in the early years and make few demands on them.

In middle and upper class families, children are reared in a lenient and permissive atmosphere. Babies are cuddled and soothed whenever they cry; tantrums are calmed with promises of gifts; and mischief is considered normal and is therefore ignored. Discipline is administered by the father through reprimands or the denial of privileges for older children. The mother is generally indulgent and, together with the other women in the household, tends to spoil her children.

In lower class homes there is little permissiveness, particularly after the child reaches the age where he can be a productive member of the family. Among the poor, children are an economic asset and are put to work at an early age to help support the family. Laxness is not tolerated, and discipline is often harsh.

Those children who have the opportunity and the means enter school at the age of seven. The wealthier may go through high school or even college, but most drop out after a few years to help support their families. The boys help their father with the farming or in their trade, and the girls help their mother with household chores. In urban areas, however, there is frequently little a boy can do to help support his family. Some shine shoes or make deliveries, but many just roam the streets. In their late teens they may drift into unskilled jobs.

RELIGION

In 1970 about 89 percent of the population was Roman Catholic. Various Protestant missions have been active since the middle of the nineteenth century, and many communities have one or more Protestant families. The only concentration of Protestants is on the Bay Islands, where the population is almost entirely Protestant. Vestiges of traditional Indian beliefs and practices are found in varying degrees among Catholic Indians, but no Indian religion survives in its original form (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups). Among the Black Carib and Antillean Negroes of the north coast, religious practices exhibit some African influences passed down from their slave forefathers.

Although most Hondurans profess the Roman Catholic faith, regular church attendance is rare except on the part of women. Children are baptized and receive religious instruction as a matter of tradition. Men, except Indians in some communities, attend church usually for social or political reasons.

Continually plagued with lack of money and lack of priests, the Roman Catholic Church has been unable to minister to the needs of the people and to keep alive their faith. Outside the larger towns and cities, few people see a priest more than once or twice a year. The majority of priests are poorly trained and lack true vocation. In addition, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in Honduras has been extremely conservative and rigid and has not kept in touch with the changing needs and desires of the population. Thus an ever-widening gap exists between the institutional church and its members.

Nevertheless, Catholicism has deep roots in tradition, and religious elements are found in many aspects of personal and national life. Personal and social values are based on Christian principles. The sacraments—baptism, marriage, and burial—although largely secularized in their execution, are religious in nature. National holidays, with few exceptions, are based on religious events. Each community has a patron saint whose feast day is celebrated as the most important annual festival in the community. Underlying religious sentiment seems to be present but remains unkindled. This has been demonstrated by the success of various evangelizing Protestant denominations and by groups of Catholic missionaries in different parts of the country.

The Roman Catholic Church

Historical Perspective

Catholicism first came to Honduras in 1521 when two Franciscan priests accompanied the first Spanish colonists and began converting the Indians. The territory of Honduras, originally included in the Bishopric of Mexico, became an independent bishopric in 1527, and its seat was established at Trujillo in 1531.

Systematic conversion of the Indians began in 1548 with the arrival of the Mercyites as the first missionary order. They established three convents in 1550 at Gracias a Dios, Tencoa, and Comayagua; but their activity was soon overshadowed by the Franciscans, who established five convents between 1574 and 1593. Franciscan activity during the next two centuries, directed from their convent in Comayagua, is credited with having firmly implanted Catholicism throughout the country.

From the beginning the Roman Catholic Church had financial problems and political difficulties within and without its hierarchy. During the colonial period the power and influence of the clergy were great. After Central American independence a series of liberal governments sought to restrict the activities of the church. In 1826 tithes were reduced by half, and monastic orders were forbidden to take directions from their superiors in Spain. In 1829 monastic orders were dissolved, and only parish priests were allowed to function.

With the collapse of the Central American Federation most of the anticlerical laws were either revoked or ignored in practice, and for the next forty years governments were friendly to the church. The early constitutions all established Roman Catholicism as the state religion to the exclusion of public exercise of any other religion. In 1861 a concordat was concluded with the Vatican, which was in force until 1880. During all that time Comayagua was the seat of the bishopric, having been moved there from Trujillo in 1561.

A serious conflict between church and state arose in 1859 over the granting of religious tolerance to the Protestant inhabitants of the Bay Islands, which the United Kingdom had ceded by treaty. The acting vicar of Honduras opposed the terms of the treaty, which granted religious toleration and, being already angry at President Santos Guardiola for refusing to approve his appointment as bishop, he used this incident to excommunicate him. The pope later revoked the excommunication and removed the vicar from his office.

In 1880 the country again came under the control of liberal anticlerical elements, and the constitution of that year granted complete religious freedom. Subsequent constitutions extended the scope of the attack on the privileges of the church, culminating in the 1936 Constitution, which provided for separation of church and state, free exercise of all religions, prohibition of monastic orders, no government subsidies to religious denominations, and no religious instruction in public schools. The 1957 Constitution removed the prohibitions on monastic orders, on government subsidies to religious educational activities, and on religious instruction in schools but retained the separation of church and state and complete religious freedom and prohibited political activity on the part of the clergy.

Organization

Under the 1965 Constitution, the church is independent of the state, which has generally not interfered in its operations. At the same time the church has remained outside of politics. The government has diplomatic representation at the Vatican, and the Holy See maintains a representative in Honduras. Church property and income are tax free, but the church does not hold any income-producing property. It depends for its income on fees and contributions, supplemented by government subsidies to some of its schools. The financial condition of the church, therefore, reflects the poverty of the population.

In 1968 Honduras was divided into the Archdiocese of Tegucigalpa, headed by an archbishop; three dioceses (San Pedro Sula, Santa Rosa de Cópan, and Comayagua); and two prelatures (Choluteca and Olancho), each headed by a bishop. A total of 101 parishes was served by 201 priests, averaging 1 priest for 10,000 people. Seventy-nine of the priests were secular, and 122 belonged to one of several religious orders. During the same year the church operated sixty-one schools, with a total of 19,964 students; four hospitals and clinics; and five charitable organizations.

Several organizations of laymen assist the parish priest in carrying out his duties. Among the more important are the confraternity, composed of both men and women, and the sisterhood, composed only of women. They are devoted to the service of the patron saint of the parish and are responsible for the care and maintenance of the saint's image in the church and for organizing the festival in his honor. Membership in these and other religious organizations carries with it great prestige.

The leadership of the church has traditionally been very conservative and has opposed many of the liberalizing reforms and trends that were changing Catholicism in other parts of the world. This rigidity is held responsible for the alienation of much of the population from the church and has caused a major split between some of the younger priests and their superiors. Many of the priests in rural areas are members of foreign missionary orders who, together with their brothers elsewhere, are concerned about the economic and social condition of their flock. They consider it their Christian duty to ameliorate these conditions and want the church to become involved in social action for that purpose. Their views are shared by many urban intellectuals who tend to view the church as a hindrance to progress. The friction within the church hierarchy over its role in the modern world was the subject of much public debate in 1970.

Practices

Religion begins to play a role in life at baptism, which is a standard practice followed by all Catholics. In areas with no resident priest, baptisms are delayed for the periodic priestly visit and are followed by a celebration.

At time of marriage the church plays only a minor role. Civil marriages and free unions far outnumber church-blessed unions. Practicing Catholics, however, desire a church marriage, and if it cannot take place at the actual time of union, it is celebrated as soon thereafter as possible.

A death is followed by a *novena* in the home of the deceased. Participation in *novenas* is generally a woman's role, although among southern Indians the men also participate. This appears to be a retention of Indian custom among recently acculturated Indians. A mass is frequently celebrated, if possible, on the last day of the *novena*. The *novena* is usually a social event, and refreshments are served each night. In the past music and dancing were part of the activity, particularly on the death of a child. This practice, however, was dying out and in the 1950s and 1960s was encountered only among the Indians of Intibucá and Texiguat.

Pilgrimages to shrines are customary among the peoples of the interior. They are never undertaken by the Black Caribs and seldom by other residents of the north coast. The purpose of a pilgrimage is usually to ask for a favor or to fulfill a promised obligation for a favor granted. The most important shrines are those of Esquipulas, just across the border in Guatemala, and Our Lady of Suyape, near Tegucigalpa. Several smaller shrines are popular pilgrimage centers for their local areas.

Similar to the pilgrimage but serving a different function is *guancasco*, a reciprocal visiting of the patron saints of neighboring towns on their respective feast days, which is accompanied by a fiesta. The practice has a long tradition in Spanish Catholicism and is practiced in *ladino* and Indian communities but not by Black Carib Catholics.

Fiestas honoring the town patron saint are celebrated in all Honduran communities, whether or not a *guancasco* also takes place. Although religiously inspired, the fiesta is basically a social event—an occasion for merriment and dancing. Traditional ceremonial dances, sometimes involving masks and costumes, are often part of fiesta activity. In Black Carib communities these have an African flavor.

Most of the common religious activities have a social aspect that frequently overshadows the religious nature of the event. A purely religious practice followed by devout Catholics is regular prayers to the patron saint of the family. These may be said by the assembled family or by individual members. Adult males, however, are not frequent participants.

Protestantism and Other Beliefs

The first Protestants came to Honduras with the annexation in 1859 of the Bay Islands, whose population was entirely Protestant, mostly Methodist. In the late 1960s twenty Protestant denominations had adherents in the country. The total Protestant community was estimated at over 56,000. Almost 600 places of regular worship were counted, actually outnumbering the count of Catholic parishes. There were 346 ordained clergymen serving the Protestant community and proselytizing for new converts. Only 72 of the clergymen were foreign missionaries; the rest were Honduran nationals.

Because of its predominance on the Bay Islands, the Methodist Church is the largest Protestant group and had an estimated 14,000 adherents in the late 1960s. The Island Methodists maintain their connection with British Methodism through the church in British Honduras. The United States Wesleyan Methodists began work on the North Coast in 1883 and have continued to supervise Methodist activity on the mainland.

The next largest Protestant denomination in Honduras was the Church of God, which had an estimated 9,600 adherents.

The Seventh-Day Adventists came to Honduras in 1928 and are the second most important group on the Bay Islands. Their membership in the late 1960s was estimated at somewhat over 6,000.

Other sizable Protestant groups were the Assemblies of God, with an estimated membership of 5,000; the Central American Mission, which was the second Protestant denomination to come to Honduras, with an estimated membership of 4,800; the Friends Board of Missions, from California, with an estimated membership of 3,000; and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, which had organized a Synod of Honduras in San Pedro Sula, with an estimated membership of 2,000.

The weak hold of the institutional Roman Catholic Church on the population has benefited Protestant evangelizing efforts. Although the church hierarchy has fought against Protestant expansion, its efforts have not been very successful, and the number of converts to Protestantism is rapidly growing. With their greater clerical manpower and probably larger financial resources, the Protestant denominations together can better reach the population than the Roman Catholic Church. Because of their evangelism and concern for the daily life of the people, they seem to fill a need that the traditional Catholic church was unable to satisfy.

Catholicism and Protestantism account for the religious beliefs of the vast majority of the population. Fewer than 250 Jews were counted in the late 1960s, mostly in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. The Baha'i sect was making an appeal in 1970 by holding a series of seminars on its philosophy and its application to modern life in different parts of the country, but the number of adherents to the sect was not known.

SOCIAL VALUES

Ladino society has been molded and influenced by two major forces that were blended to create a third. Heirs of Hispanic traditions and Indian customs, the *ladinos* have modified and adapted these to the reality and historical experience of their own country. Different life styles between the upper and middle classes and the lower class urban and rural *ladinos*, however, have produced differing interpretations of these values. Nonetheless, all *ladinos* share a similar cultural orientation and, in this sense, a unity of expression.

This unity extends to the Indian and Black Carib segments of the population whose values have been recently acculturated. Only the Antillean population of the Bay Islands, whose values are based on their English Protestant heritage, differ from the norm. Their small number and their insularity, however, make the difference insignificant in a national context (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

Personalism

The central value of this culture is the individual. Each person is recognized as a unique being with a worth and dignity emanating simply from his humanity. There is no concept of equal rights and opportunities because the individual is considered to be not equal but unique. His inner essence, or soul, is characterized by dignity, honor, and valor gained not by deeds but by natural endowment.

This emphasis on the soul and the inherent worth of the individual stems from the early influence of the Catholic church and also from the Hispanic heritage of Latin America. The conquistadores were marginal individuals, insecure in the traditional social structure of Spain. In keeping with their Catholic heritage, they placed a heavy emphasis on the uniqueness and dignity of the soul regardless of the outward prestige of the individual.

Because of the high value of the person, the honor of the inner self is defended at all costs, even death. Thus, insults are usually met with violent emotional outbursts, both physical and verbal, or at very least, with deep resentment. To avoid, this, the Spanish American language is laden with elaborate patterns of social courtesies that characterize all interaction except those on a very personal level. In politics, however, these courtesies are forgotten, and campaigns are characterized by attacks on the dignity and honor of the candidates. As a result, compromise is exceedingly difficult because the individual cannot forgive the personal insults of his opponents.

The first loyalty is to the self, and commitments seldom extend further than to the family or to a few close friends. An individual seeks to acquire power and wealth, often at the expense of the community, so that he can protect and elevate the self and the family. This type of individuality perceives itself not as a unit in the group but as the group itself.

The value of personalism discourages involvement with large numbers of people. Kinship ties are one of the few commitments that the *ladino* accepts willingly. Within this framework, he feels that his uniqueness is appreciated and understood, and he can drop the defenses that characterize his social interactions. In addition to kindred, an individual trusts only those with whom he has established an intimate and personal friendship. Distrust of others limits impersonal interactions, and such things as large-scale economic ventures are hindered unless the administrators evoke fellow feeling or congeniality.

The social heroes who emerge from this emphasis on personalism are strong and dynamic individuals with little regard for the laws of society or of the government. They make their own. In a male-dominated society the concept of virility is particularly stressed and, coupled with individualism, has produced the figure of the *macho* (literally, male). One of the favorite personality types, the *macho* exhibits reckless daring, haughtiness, a love of action, and a competence in the intellectual or physical realm. In some contexts and on some levels, the term *macho* is applied in its most literal sense and implies sexual prowess.

When the *macho* personality is found in a leadership capacity, the concept is often exaggerated and expanded to become a *caudillo*. Literally translated as leader, this figure is the ultimate expression of personalism. He seldom represents any political ideals or espouses a specific social or economic program. If he does, these are secondary. The *caudillo* is a leader on the basis of his magnetism and strength of character. His followers are attracted by the inner qualities that they see in him and admire.

Hierarchy

Historically, Honduran society was highly stratified. The structure is no longer as rigid as it was during the colonial era, but the value of hierarchy remains. It is mirrored in the political, social, and religious spheres and is evident in interpersonal relationships. This value does not conflict with personalism, however, for the latter stresses the inner uniqueness of the individual, not his outward social position.

There are two aspects to the hierarchy system. One consists of grades or strata in society, and the other involves reciprocal duties. Even in a small gathering a *ladino* will immediately attempt to assess the social position of his companions, usually on the basis of appearance, wealth, heritage, power, and prestige. In a small town, ranks of various families are well known, recognizable to anyone.

In the second aspect, reciprocal arrangement, an individual acknowledges the higher position of another and offers him loyalty and performs certain expected duties. In return the person of the higher status extends the protection of his position and assistance in times of need. This phenomenon is found in its most informal in the family. Here the father is the center of authority and occupies the highest status; others owe him their loyalty and obedience in return for the food, housing, and protection that he supplies. This loyalty is total, and middle and lower class individuals feel that a son should obey his father whether right or wrong. The father, in return, is expected to provide economic necessities and education.

The concept of hierarchical reciprocity is expanded and institutionalized in the system of the *patrón* (master—see Glossary). A person of a lower position always seeks a person of higher status as *patrón*, since the latter can obviously provide more assistance and protection. The *patrón* relationship reached its most complete form on the large estates, where the owner acted as the father and the tenants owed him a certain amount of work in exchange for a small plot of land and protection from all outsiders, including representatives of the law.

In the twentieth century the concept of the *patrón* has been weakened, since it is difficult to establish a personal relationship with a large, impersonal business. The ideal remains in force, nonetheless, and businesses are expected to meet certain obligations, such as providing a cash bonus for unexpected emergencies, weddings, fiestas, and the like, and taking personal interest in the well-being of the employee. The government is seen as the major *patrón* and is charged with the responsibility for both personal and national problems. Since government agencies have also become largely impersonal, the figure of the president has assumed the responsibilities and personality of a *patrón*. This is illustrated by the fact that each week there are regular times set aside when anyone from any social stratum can see the president and ask for help with his personal problems.

Fatalism

An underlying factor that determines behavior and attitudes is a sense of fatalism, which comes from both the Indian and Hispanic traditions. It may take the form of heroic defiance or passive resignation. The first is a heightened expression of personalism in that each person owes it to himself to strive to live and die with dignity. Yet, fate is beyond the control of man and may often be unjust. Fatalism is manifested in the seemingly fanatical defiance of danger and hardships on the part of revolutionaries. It is also expressed in the elaborate observance of ceremonies connected with death, funerals, and burials.

Resignation is shown in the unquestioning acceptance of one's lot in life and the disinclination to seek constructive solutions to problems. This does not preclude the need to strive to fulfill one's inner personality but, if an earnest attempt results in failure, fate can be blamed and the individual is not burdened with feelings of guilt.

Work and Leisure

Work for its own sake has a negative value as is exhibited by the tendency to put things off. Great amounts of energy may be expended on things that are considered important, but idleness has a value too. Among the things that are considered important are such leisure activities as political and philosophical discussions with friends, literary or artistic self-expression, and enjoyment of nature and other activities that under the Protestant ethic would be considered as expressions of laziness. Characteristically, the Protestant inhabitants of the north coast and Bay Islands spend much more time and effort in productive activity than do their *ladino* compatriots. *Ladinos* have a great interest in ideas and sentiments, which often surpasses their interest in material matters. This makes them responsive to all kinds of ideologies and emotional appeals.

CHAPTER 6

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS

The country is a constitutional democratic republic with legal power concentrated in the hands of the chief executive. Victorious presidential candidates have in the past needed strong personal military backing to stay in power, however, and many presidents have come from the armed forces. The national Congress and the Supreme Court of Justice have had little influence in settling critical political questions, despite the authority given them by law. The nation's slow economic development, its divided past, and its difficult terrain have concentrated political activity in the capital city. Such factors have promoted regionalism and permitted the emergence of semiautonomous enclaves, such as the one along the north coast centered around San Pedro Sula (see ch. 8, The Economy). Despite such regionalism, in the absence of a tradition of vigorous local government, local administration with few exceptions tends to rely heavily on the central government. Peaceful transfers of presidential power have been uncommon in the past, the changes frequently involving irregular takeovers, revolts, military coups, electoral violence, or unconstitutional succession.

In 1970 the nation was still recovering from the rancors of the July 1969 war with El Salvador. The conflict, whose aftermath continued to dominate foreign relations, grew out of an ill-defined boundary, economic differences, large-scale Salvadorean immigration to Honduras, irresponsible journalism, and rising nationalistic sentiments in both countries.

The conflict was unrepresentative of the two nations' past relations, which have generally been cordial and unmarred by serious differences. By contrast, Honduran relations with Guatemala and Nicaragua—the country's other immediate neighbors—had been characterized by frequent clashes and longstanding boundary disputes that were resolved only within the past ten years. The United States government has consistently enjoyed warm relations with Honduras, even though the presence of large and conspicuous private United States-owned enterprises in the country has been a potential source of friction. Since World War II the country has generally provided firm support for United States policies directed against Communist involvement in the hemisphere.

GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

Constitutional Background

Constitutions have tended to be short lived. A total of twelve have been promulgated between the time the first one was drafted in 1825 and mid-1970. A basic charter promulgated in 1965 was still in effect in 1970. This turnover, more rapid in the nineteenth century than it has been in the twentieth, is the product of two fundamental features of national politics. First, irregular changes of government have often tended to discredit an existing constitution along with the ousted government, thereby prompting the new government to promulgate a new basic charter. Second, Honduran attitudes are generally in line with a Latin American tradition that tends to treat the constitution as a statement of ideals that may from time to time need replacement, rather than as a permanent document intimately bound to everyday political practice.

Early constitution-makers borrowed freely from Spanish, French, and Anglo-American political concepts. These concepts were generally incorporated directly, without any significant attempt at alteration, but over the years ideas that were clearly unworkable tended to be weeded out. The jury system is an example of one such borrowed idea that failed. Included in the first constitution (1824), it enjoyed neither popularity nor success and was kept out of the five constitutions that followed. After this long absence it returned in modified form in the seventh constitution (1894) but was omitted from all subsequent charters. During both periods of use it quickly became evident that there was a serious shortage of qualified jurors and that most juries showed little inclination to convict defendants, even if they were clearly guilty.

The evolutionary process also produced new articles designed to prevent undesirable practices; yet such articles often did little more than document the existence of the activities they were designed to prevent. Because of the gap between constitutional principles and day-to-day activity, the new articles usually had little impact on political behavior.

The emergence of constitutional provisions barring presidential reelection is illustrative. During the nineteenth century few presidents completed an elected term of office, and problems concerning reelection were therefore minor. As the twentieth century approached, however, political volatility declined, and the possibilities for abusing the right of reelection became more evident. Accordingly, the Constitution of 1894 and all twentieth-century constitutions have explicitly barred reelection of a president for consecutive terms.

Interest in strengthening this ban on indefinite presidential succession was further sharpened by the sixteen-year tenure of President Tiburcio Carías Andino from 1932 to 1948. Partly for this reason, both the 1957 and 1965 constitutions contained very strong antireelection provisions. The articles still valid in the 1965 document are especially notable; Article 193 prohibits any president who has served for more than half the legal six-year term from ever holding office again, and Article 194 provides mandatory removal from office of any official who advocates amendment of Article 193. Nevertheless, a few students of Honduran politics believe these measures would not pose much of an obstacle for any reasonably strong chief executive who decided to run for another term.

With few exceptions, the nation's constitutions have grown progressively longer, primarily because succeeding charters contain more detailed treatment of matters covered in the earlier ones. New approaches to government are infrequent, and radical departures from previous constitutional practice are very rare.

Abstract expressions of idealism are found in all the charters, which also contain detailed regulations governing specific activities. This mixture of laudable aims and specific rules has sometimes produced provisions that exceed government capabilities. For example, Article 150 of the 1965 Constitution states, "Public education shall be free, and elementary education shall also be compulsory and completely financed by the state." Yet, according to the Central American Council of Higher Education, over 90 percent of the nation's work force had received no education, and over 60 percent of the primary schools in the country did not offer all six grades, making compliance with the provision beyond the scope of available resources (see ch. 7, Education, Culture, and Information). This type of disparity bolsters the prevailing attitude that the Constitution contains the sincere and legitimate goals of the state, irrespective of the state's ability to realize them.

Constitutions of 1957 and 1965

The 1957 constitution departed from previous ones by making significant inroads into the social field. Titles pertaining to citizenship, individual rights, suspension of constitutional guarantees, legislative and executive powers, and organization of the judiciary vary little from those contained in the Constitution of 1936. Yet it was nearly twice as long as its predecessor because of extensive regulations governing the family, labor, electoral procedures, the armed forces, and other matters. Among the new provisions were a series enumerating specific rights and social guarantees not mentioned explicitly in earlier documents. These paralleled the policies of President Ramón Villeda Morales (1957—63), which were notably more liberal and labor oriented than those of his predecessors (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions; ch. 8, The Economy).

The overthrow of President Villeda Morales in 1963 generated impetus for the creation of a new basic charter, and a constituent assembly was elected in 1965. Composed mostly of members of the National Party who supported Villeda Morale's de facto successor, Colonel Osvaldo López Arellano, the Constituent Assembly created a constitution very similar to that of 1957, designated Colonel López as president for the first six-year term, and transformed itself into the first ordinary congress under the new charter—thereby eliminating the need for legislative elections until 1971.

Like most of its predecessors, the 1965 Constitution divides the government into executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The president, designated commander in chief of the armed forces, is elected by direct popular vote. The legislature consists of a unicameral congress whose members are popularly elected through a system of proportional representation to six-year terms. Congressmen, like the president, are technically barred from succeeding themselves. The judiciary is headed by the Supreme Court of Justice, consisting of seven justices elected by Congress to hold office for six years.

The provisions of the 1965 document are contained in fourteen separate titles, subdivided into chapters and articles. Title I sets forth the territorial limits, fundamental philosophical principles, and general structure of the government. Specific delimitations of the national territory consist of the Swan Islands in the Caribbean (also claimed by the United States) and territorial seas, including the continental shelf, out to twelve miles or to a depth where seabed and subsoil resources can no longer be exploited. The title also stipulates that Honduras is part of the former Federal Republic of Central America and "recognizes the primary necessity of restoring a union with one or more states of the former federation" (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

Title II concerns itself with citizenship, elections, and political parties. Citizenship provisions, of particular interest because of the 1969 war with El Salvador, are quite vague, especially with respect to immigrants from other Central American states. The pertinent part states only that such immigrants may be considered native-born Hondurans if they reside one year in the country, petition competent authorities, and fulfill the legal requirements, provided that reciprocal treatment is afforded by their country of origin (see ch. 4, Population and Ethnic Groups).

All eligible citizens are constitutionally required to vote in popular elections, but in practice many fail to do so. Political parties opposed to the "democratic spirit of the Honduran people," such as the Communist Party, are forbidden, but the Constitution guarantees freedom of operation for legally registered parties.

Titles III and IV are primarily concerned with individual and social guarantees, many of them very detailed—such as Article 77, which states with respect to search and seizure that "search of domiciles may not take place between seven o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning. . . ."

Some of the more important individual guarantees are the right of *amparo* (an order of restraint against imprisonment or an administrative act that infringes on one's rights) and habeas corpus; freedom of speech, press, and assembly; and the right of asylum for political refugees. Other provisions include the banning of expropriation of private property without prior compensation, prohibition of capital punishment, limitation of prison sentences to a maximum of thirty years, and freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention.

The right of the state to protect itself is also recognized, and Articles 107 and 108 lay down conditions under which most of these guarantees may be suspended by the president during a state of emergency. Such action, in the form of a presidential decree, must be ratified, modified, or rejected by Congress within thirty days and automatically expires within forty-five days unless a new decree is issued.

Title IV contains many of the ideas implanted for the first time in the Constitution of 1957. It is primarily concerned with "social guarantees" affecting labor but also contains sections dealing with the family and education. Among other things, the title establishes maximum working hours and rules for setting minimum wages, working conditions, and fringe benefits. Child labor is prohibited. The right to strike is made explicit, but it is also noted that the state must protect the rights of capital and employers (see ch. 8, The Economy). With respect to family ties, recognition is given to de facto unions, and the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate births is abolished (see ch. 5, Social Structure, Family, and Religion). The title also stipulates that free public education will be provided by the state and that primary education will be made compulsory, despite a chronic shortage of teachers and facilities.

Title V, the longest section, enumerates the organization and functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Titles VI and VII cover the Supreme Court's power of judicial review and outline the roles of the president and Congress in initiating, adopting, and promulgating new legislation.

Title VIII devotes itself to economic matters, including the basic rules for the private sector, foreign investment, exploitation of natural resources, state intervention and expropriation, autonomous agencies, and state financial and budgetary arrangements. Though stating in Article 251 that "economic activities are fundamentally the function of private enterprise," state intervention is permitted where deemed necessary "for the maintenance of public order or social well-being." Monopolies favoring private groups or individuals are banned (see ch. 8, The Economy).

Two minor titles, IX and X, establish rules for the civil service and state that public officials are liable to prosecution for abuse of office.

Title XI enumerates the regulations governing the armed forces. Maintaining the concept of an armed force only indirectly dependent on the president, Article 324 stipulates that the chief of the armed forces is to be selected by the national Congress from a list of nominees submitted by the Superior Council of National Defense. Congress also has exclusive jurisdiction over removal of an armed forces chief before expiration of his six-year term of office, an action that may be accomplished through a two-thirds vote of its members. These provisions have no effect on the president's stipulated role as commander in chief of the armed forces and do not impair his right to issue orders to the armed forces chief in this capacity (see ch. 9, Armed Forces and Internal Security).

Because of past experience with military coups and presidential self-extension in office, the Constitution contains strongly worded articles directed against these practices (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). Article 319 states that "the armed forces of Honduras are . . . essentially professional nonpolitical, obedient, and nondeliberative. They are instituted . . . above all to see that the principles of free suffrage and noncontinuity of the Presidency of the Republic are not violated." Other articles establish compulsory military service and set up the Superior Council of National Defense, an advisory body composed of the secretary of defense, the chief of the armed forces, the chief of staff of the armed forces, and subordinate military commanders.

Title XII provides for division of the country into departments and municipalities and lays down rules for selection of departmental and municipal officials. Title XIII regulates amendment of the Constitution which may be accomplished by a two-thirds vote of two successive legislatures; the articles governing presidential succession cannot be amended.

The final section, Title XIV, contains "transitory provisions" governing the initial selection of top public officials and the manner in which the new constitution is to be put into effect. Within this section the Constituent Assembly gives itself the power to select the president of the Republic for the 1965—71 term and stipulates that the assembly will itself be transformed into the first national Congress holding legislative power for the same period. The Constitution went into effect on June 6, 1965.

Structure of Government

The government is highly centralized, most authority being concentrated in the hands of the president. Although the principle of separation of powers has been enunciated in most constitutions, the legislature is usually responsive to the chief executive and the judiciary has traditionally been reluctant to assume an active, independent role. Local government on the department level is directed primarily by presidential appointees. Theoretically, the Constitution places limitations on presidential power by fixing the president's legal term of office and by permitting Congress to override vetoes, interpellate ministers, appoint the chief of the armed forces, disapprove the administrative conduct of the executive branch, and initiate impeachment proceedings. In fact, such congressional powers have resulted in little, if any, diminution of the president's traditionally strong position.

The Executive Branch

The executive branch consists of the president, three presidential designates, and cabinet officers who, as a group, constitute the Council of Ministers; also included in the executive branch are subordinate executive departments and a variety of autonomous and semiautonomous agencies. The presidential designates are the equivalent of vice presidents with few official duties; should the president be unable to complete his six-year term, Congress can select one of the designates to replace him. If none of the designates can take office, the executive power technically devolves on the Council of Ministers—consisting of all the cabinet ministers—which must call elections within fifteen days.

The Presidency. Honduran constitutions have generally required that the president be elected by a simple majority of the popular vote, rather than by a mere plurality. This procedure has produced technical difficulties on numerous occasions, for oftentimes the candidate has not received the requisite majority. Theoretically, selection of the president is then made by Congress but, in fact, the lack of a definite winner has generally been regarded as a cue for forceful takeover by one of the leading candidates.

According to the 1965 Constitution, a presidential candidate must be a native-born citizen over thirty years of age. If the candidate is a member of the clergy, armed forces, cabinet, or national elections council, or if he was selected for any job by Congress, he must resign his position at least one year before the presidential election. In addition, he cannot have previously held the powers of the president for more than three years and cannot have held them at all within one year of the election. Close relatives of the incumbent president are barred from becoming presidential candidates.

The president's powers include the right to appoint and remove most government officials and employees, approve or veto measures passed by Congress, organize and direct the armed forces, confer military rank, direct foreign affairs, make treaties, declare war and make peace while Congress is not in session, suspend constitutional guarantees, and call Congress into special session or propose extension of regular sessions. The president is also empowered to propose legislative measures and to veto bills passed by Congress. In the economic field he can create and abolish public services; his duties include maintaining harmony between employers and workers, supervising the collection of taxes and regulating state expenditures, supervising the operation of banks and other credit establishments, and submitting a proposed budget to Congress once a year (see ch. 8, The Economy).

There are a number of restrictions on presidential authority, foremost of which is the constitutional ban on reelection. Other restrictions include a requirement that all presidential decrees and other formal acts be endorsed by those cabinet ministers whose departments are affected. All matters deemed by the president to be of national importance and all decisions to suspend constitutional guarantees or to contract long-term loans must be approved by a majority vote of the Council of Ministers.

With respect to limitations imposed by the legislature, Congress must approve most executive actions affecting areas outside the executive branch and can override a presidential veto with a two-thirds vote. The president must also receive congressional authorization if he wishes to leave the country for more than thirty days and, at least theoretically, congressional control over the president's economic activities is extensive. Not only must Congress approve the president's annual budget proposal and all loans contracted by the executive branch, but the chief executive must publish a quarterly account of public expenditures. Congress can then approve or reject these reports on the basis of investigations by the Office of the Comptroller General, an auxiliary legislative agency whose chief officers are congressional appointees. Adverse findings may be turned over to the Office of the Attorney General or can be used as the basis for requesting impeachment proceedings by the judicial branch.

The Cabinet. Cabinet appointees must fulfill the same technical requirements as presidential candidates. They cannot be close relatives of the president, must not be engaged in enterprises carrying out contracts for the government, and cannot owe money to the public treasury. Once appointed, they must submit annual reports to Congress on the work of their departments and are subject to interpellation by Congress at any time. Yet the only way Congress can force their resignation without presidential consent is to declare that grounds exist for impeachment and turn the matter over to the Supreme Court.

The 1965 Constitution directed the creation of twelve executive departments, each headed by a cabinet minister. These departments were charged with administering twelve government divisions: Government and Justice, Office of the President, Foreign Affairs, Economy, Treasury, National Defense and Public Security, Public Health, Social Welfare, Public Education, Communications and Public Works, Labor and Social Security, Natural Resources, and any others that might be created. As of 1970 the López government was operating with ten executive departments, having consolidated the ministerial functions of economy and treasury into one department and those of social welfare and public health into another.

The Legislative Branch

The Congress. The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Congress that meets for at least six months annually; a permanent committee that arranges legislative affairs when Congress is not in session; and the Office of the Comptroller General, a subordinate organ assigned the duty of reviewing government expenditures and informing Congress of any irregularities. In theory, Congress has sufficiently broad powers to prevent complete presidential control and can exert a strong independent influence on national politics; but in fact these powers are rarely used, and executive preeminence is almost never challenged. Historically, Congress has been controlled by presidential supporters and has usually shown reluctance to take any important action opposed by the president.

As of 1970 the unicameral Congress was still composed of the members of the Constituent Assembly elected in 1965. The Constitution adopted that year states that they will serve the established six-year congressional term and will then be replaced in 1971 by popularly elected deputies. Each department is entitled to 1 deputy for every 30,000 inhabitants and 1 additional deputy for every fraction over each additional 15,000. A department with less than 30,000 people is entitled to elect 1 deputy. As constitutions have changed there have been changes in the number of people to be represented by a deputy, but the precedent of a one-house legislature is firmly established; the last bicameral legislature was abolished by the Constitution of 1865.

To qualify for election to Congress, the Constitution stipulates that a candidate must hold no high office in the executive branch of the government or the armed forces, nor can he be a close relative of persons holding such positions. Also ineligible are members of electoral agencies, relatives of members of the National Elections Council, and government contractors, concessionaires, and debtors. Other than these technical limitations designed to prevent conflict of interest, the 1965 Constitution specifies no additional qualifications. Once elected, deputies enjoy strict immunity from accusation and trial, military service, and prosecution for parliamentary opinions or initiatives.

Regular sessions of Congress are held from May 26 through October 26 of each year but may be prolonged by congressional resolution. In addition, special sessions may be called at any time, either by the president or by a majority of deputies. Presidential suspension of constitutional guarantees while Congress is not in session automatically requires convocation of a special session. All state organs, including Congress itself, are constitutionally barred from preventing the installation of Congress, and penalties are provided for deputies who fail to attend sessions without sufficient cause. A majority of the deputies constitutes a quorum for the purposes of installing Congress and holding sessions.

Ordinary legislation may be initiated by individual deputies, the president, or the Supreme Court in matters within the court's jurisdiction. After being prepared by a committee, the proposed bill must be debated for three days, unless a majority of Congress decides an emergency exists, in which case it can be voted on immediately. After being passed by majority vote, the bill goes to the president for approval. If he vetoes the legislation, it goes back to Congress for further debate and may be passed over the veto by a two-thirds vote. Besides enacting ordinary legislation, Congress elects the seven principal and five alternate Supreme Court justices, the chief of the armed forces, the comptroller general, and the attorney general. In the event of deadlocked elections, Congress is also empowered to select the president, presidential designates, and members of Congress. Congress is also authorized to initiate impeachment proceedings; declare war and make peace; confirm assignment of all military ranks above captain; fix the strength of the permanent army; and control government revenues by voting on the budget, establishing taxes and assessments, approving loans, and regulating payment of the national debt. Other congressional powers include approving or disapproving periodic reports of public expenditures submitted by the executive branch, the administrative conduct of the executive and judicial branches, and requests by the president to leave the country for more than thirty days. Congress may also amend the constitution, but this requires a two-thirds vote of all its members during regular legislative sessions of two consecutive years.

The Permanent Committee. While Congress is not in session, its place is taken by a nine-member housekeeping organ called the Permanent Committee. This committee has no lawmaking function and is powerless to approve or disapprove actions by other branches of the government, though it can give the president permission to leave the country. The committee's primary duties consist of preparing pending business for the next legislative session, keeping records of actions taken by other branches in the interim period, and convoking special sessions of Congress if necessary. Because of the weakness of this arrangement, in effect legislative functions are temporarily superseded by the president's decree-making power when Congress is not in session.

The Judicial Branch

The Constitution stipulates that there will be a Supreme Court of Justice consisting of seven justices and five alternates appointed by the national Congress. Below the Supreme Court are appellate courts, departmental and district courts, and justices of the peace. All court decisions are rendered by officials of the judicial branch, the jury system having been last discarded in 1924.

The Supreme Court. The Supreme Court of Justice sits in Tegucigalpa; justices appointed to it serve for a term of six years and may be reappointed. To become a Supreme Court justice one must be a citizen by birth, over thirty years of age, and a lawyer who has held the position of judge in the lower, or appellate, courts for at least one year and has practiced law for at least five years. In addition, appointees must have all the qualifications required of cabinet ministers and cannot be closely related to other members of the court.

The president of the Supreme Court is chosen during the court's first session from among the seven justices and presides over the body for all of his six-year term. Powers of the Supreme Court include impeachment of high public officials if Congress has declared that grounds for impeachment exist; nullification of law in specific instances where it is judged unconstitutional; consideration of cases of *amparo* (petitions based on charges of unconstitutional abuses by public officials); and appointment of subordinate judicial officials, including magistrates of the courts of appeal, lower court judges, labor judges, registrars of property, and officials of the so-called Public Ministry (the Attorney General's Office).

Despite these sweeping powers, the Supreme Court has generally refrained from exercising much independence. For instance, it has tended to avoid using its powers of appointment, review, and removal to supervise lower court activities and has at times permitted this function to be unofficially assumed by the executive branch. Despite its power to interpret law, it also has generally refrained from adopting any procedures not clearly outlined in existing statutes; where the power of judicial review is involved, it has refused in virtually all cases to make a ruling on the constitutionality of the law in question.

Lower Courts. Though the Supreme Court functions as a court of last resort, most appeals cases are handled by several courts of appeals, located in various major cities. These courts are each composed of three judges, one of whom is designated president of the court. All appeals court judges are appointed by the Supreme Court.

As their name implies, the appeals courts are limited almost entirely to an appellate jurisdiction, original jurisdiction being exercised in most cases by judges of departmental or district courts. These latter regional justices may also have appellate jurisdiction in some cases; like appeals court justices, all of them are appointed by the Supreme Court. Each of these regional courts is headed by one judge, whose activities are subject to supervision by the appropriate appeals court and who in turn supervises the activities of justices of the peace under his jurisdiction.

Local labor courts are charged with settling disputes between employers and workers and handle ordinary labor civil and criminal cases; on occasion, such disputes can be taken to the appeals level, where a Labor Appeals Court exists. There are also rent courts (*juzgados de letras de inquilinato*), capable of dealing with landlord-tenant disputes (see ch. 8, The Economy).

The lowest level in the judicial system is occupied by the justices of the peace. These officials, appointed by the regional judges, operate courts having jurisdiction over population centers of a few thousand people, though the exact number of people per justice of the peace varies significantly from place to place. Because of the isolation of many areas, the authority enjoyed by these justices may be quite broad. Civil disputes involving small sums of money may be tried in their courts, and in some instances they have the power to undertake such cases entirely on their own. They also have unlimited jurisdiction over minor criminal offenses and may hear major criminal cases with the permission of the nearest regional judge. Unlike regional and appellate court justices, however, justices of the peace need not be lawyers. Their salaries are paid by the municipalities in which they reside and tend to be very low, causing morale problems and difficulty in obtaining qualified people for the job.

Local Government

The Department. For administrative purposes the country is divided into eighteen departments, seventeen of them on the mainland and one, Islas de la Bahía Department (Bay Islands), off the north coast (see ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions). There is also a Central District, which consists of the cities of Tegucigalpa and Comayagüela.

The chief official of each department is a governor appointed by the president. His main functions are representing the central government, controlling administration of the department, and presiding over the departmental council. The council, composed of a few unsalaried officials, enjoys some minor legislative powers and is authorized to judge disputes between lesser administrative units.

Municipal Government. Each department is divided into municipalities (*municipios*), subordinate administrative units headed by a mayor (*alcalde*) and *regidores* (a number of subordinate officials). Both the mayor and the *regidores* are elected, nonsalaried officials.

The municipality is invested with power to legislate and levy taxes and is in theory, highly autonomous. In fact, however, the central government generally exerts strong influence over selection of important municipal officials, the legislative and taxing powers are rarely used, and de facto dependence on superior governmental bodies keeps municipal leaders from exercising much authority. Most of these municipalities, which may contain fewer than 1,000 people, have little wealth or political influence; but where large urban areas are concerned the municipality may become quite important, to the extent where the mayor and his *regidores* overshadow the departmental government.

The fact that the municipal and some departmental posts are unsalaried decreases the level of interest in these jobs in poor departments and municipalities. On the other hand, in relatively well-to-do or populous areas such posts offer ample opportunity for wielding significant political power, and competition for them may be fierce. In cases where no salaries are paid, a certain amount of self-enrichment is generally regarded as inevitable and even socially acceptable, despite the existence of legal statutes prohibiting such practices.

POLITICAL DYNAMICS

Despite the democratic orientation of the nation's constitutions, day-to-day politics have been characterized by irregular and often violent changes of government and by irregular continuance in office on the part of powerful chief executives. Particularly in the Republic's early days government changes were very frequent. If one includes the years when Honduras belonged to the United Provinces of Central America, the presidency formally changed hands 120 times between 1824 and 1970. Yet only 22 of these changes took place in the twentieth century, partly because of the long sixteen-year rule of President Tiburcio Carías Andino during the 1932—48 period (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

The principal causes of political instability have been the nation's poor economy, regional rivalries growing out of difficult geographic conditions and the divided colonial past, lack of a strong sense of nationalism until recent times, and frequent interference in domestic politics during the nineteenth century by neighboring countries (see ch. 2, Historical Setting).

During the twentieth century there has been less foreign interference, methods of communication have improved, and some internal consolidation has taken place. These circumstances have tended to redound to the advantage of the central government, whose leaders completed their terms of office with greater regularity and who were increasingly able to use their strong positions to stay in office beyond their legal terms. An extreme example of such extension was manifested by President Carías, who was popularly elected in 1932, extended in office by the promulgation of a new constitution in 1936, and extended again in office until 1948 by a constitutional amendment of 1939. Most strong twentieth-century presidents have shown a desire to succeed themselves, and many have actively attempted to do so.

Political Background, 1948–70

When President Carías stepped down voluntarily in 1948, he had sufficient power to assure that the presidency was occupied by his chosen successor and fellow National Party member, Juan Manuel Gálvez. So complete was the former's control, in fact, that the Liberal Party candidate opposing Gálvez withdrew from the presidential race before the elections.

Though President Gálvez enjoyed considerable power in his own right, Carías continued to maintain a strong position within the National Party and to exercise a good deal of influence behind the scenes. By the time the six-year term of Gálvez neared its end, however, the physical vigor and influence of Carías had declined to a point where his sudden decision to run in the 1954 elections sparked a major split in Nationalist ranks. The leader of this party revolt was Abraham Williams, who had been vice president throughout the Carías years. In the wake of his former chief's decision to run, Williams and his followers bolted the National Party and organized the National Reformist movement as a separate party competing in the elections. The opposition Liberal Party, which had remained weak and torn with internal dissension during the Carías years, named Ramón Villeda Morales as its candidate.

The result of this three-way contest was a victory of sorts for Ramón Villeda Morales, who received within 10,000 votes of a clear majority; Carías came in second, and Williams, third. The Villeda Morales tally was not enough for election, however, since an absolute majority was required. Theoretically, such a deadlocked election should have been referred to Congress for a decision but, because of a boycott by the losing party's elected deputies, Congress could not assemble a quorum. A few months before the election the vice president, Julio Lozano Diaz, had assumed the presidency to fill out the term of President Gálvez, who had become ill, and he now took control of the government with the stated intention of preparing the way for new elections. In 1955, however, he organized his own political vehicle, the National Unity Party (Partido Unión Nacional—PUN), obtained the support of Abraham Williams and the Reformists, and set out to perpetuate himself in office.

Elections were scheduled for October 1956, but Liberal Party candidate Villeda Morales was exiled before the elections—ostensibly for attempting to organize a workers' strike—and National Party members refused to participate in what they believed to be a rigged contest. Lozano won but, because he had alienated most of the country's political leaders by his behavior, a group of young army officers ousted him two weeks after his victory.

The military junta that replaced Lozano set about arranging for relatively free election of a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution and select a president. The election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Liberal Party, whose representatives dominated the subsequent constitutional convention and elected Liberal leader Ramón Villeda Morales as president. The new president took office on December 21, 1957, the same day the new constitution went into effect.

The basic policies of the Villeda Morales government were more liberal than those of any government before it and produced objections from wealthy conservatives. Among other things, a new labor code and social security law were adopted, which provided such welfare benefits as full pay during illnesses lasting up to eight months, severance pay on similar terms, ten weeks' full pay for pregnant female workers, and employer-supported nurseries. Such measures constituted a great change for a nation where labor laws had not existed before 1952 and unions had been banned by law until 1954 (see ch. 8, The Economy).

The government's prolabor attitude, together with deficit spending and increased taxes on large corporations, discouraged private investment. One of the two large banana firms on the north coast sharply reduced its operations, general foreign investment fell off, growing amounts of local capital left the country, and both unemployment and prices rose. There was also active resistance from the political Right, the visible manifestation of which was a series of small revolts that kept tensions high but which were unable to topple the government.

To protect himself against right-wing unrest and against disaffection within the armed forces, President Villeda Morales created the 2,500-man Civil Guard, separate from the regular military service and responsible directly to himself. The existence of this special force increased the dissatisfaction of armed forces leaders, but the military took no direct action until the election campaign of 1963 was well under way. Two developments had a part in spurring the military to act: first, it appeared that the elections were likely to be won by the Liberal Party contender, Modesto Rodas Alvarado, who had publicly stressed his antimilitary views and promised to curtail military power; and second, toward the end of the campaign Villeda Morales agreed to disarm the Civil Guard, thereby reducing the likelihood of organized resistance to an armed takeover. The result was the military overthrow of the government on October 3, 1963, ten days before the scheduled elections.

The leader of the coup, air force Colonel Osvaldo López Arellano, adopted a more conservative economic policy than his predecessor and gradually aligned himself with the National Party, without actually become a member. After more than a year of direct military rule, a constituent assembly was elected in early 1965 to draft a new constitution and arrange for selection of a civil government. The pro-López Nationalists won a clear majority in the popular election and dominated the drafting of the Constitution of 1965. The assembly then assumed the right to name the first president of the Republic under the new constitution and elected Colonel López to that position. It also transformed itself into the first regular congress for the initial six-year legislative term.

Despite minor unrest among student, teacher, and labor groups, the López government continued to support traditional moderate-conservative policies in an atmosphere of relative internal calm. The government's economic conservatism and its efforts to attract foreign capital provided a very favorable investment climate. This fact, combined with the positive effects of membership in the Central American Common Market, gave a lift to the economy up to the time of the 1969 war with El Salvador and added materially to the strength and stability of the government.

Less than one year in advance of the presidential and congressional elections tentatively scheduled for 1971, the chief executive's position was strong enough to create rumors in the press that he would attempt to perpetuate himself in office.

Political Parties

The Constitution of 1965 guarantees the right of legally registered political parties to function, provided they are not based on divisions of race, sex, or class. Antidemocratic parties or those subordinate to "an international or foreign organization whose ideological programs threaten the sovereignty of the state" are prohibited. This latter provision appears directed primarily at Communist movements, which have never been a major political force but which have provided a lively source of controversy since the general labor strike of 1954 (see ch. 8, The Economy).

Entities calling themselves political parties have played an important role in government since independence, but most of them were not parties in the true sense of the word. Instead, what existed during most of the nineteenth century were armed political bands loyal to a particular leader.

The Liberal Party

It was not until Policarpo Bonilla established a fairly stable and permanent Liberal Party organization around 1891 that any effective party became even vaguely discernible (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). Yet the party's only effective unifying force was loyalty to Bonilla; as a result it eventually split up into quarreling factions and disappeared. It was brought back to life around 1920, but internal disputes made party unity unattainable through the following decade and into the years of the Carías regime.

The Liberal Party did not become significant again until 1954, when its factions united in support of the presidential candidacy of Ramón Villeda Morales. At that time it gradually became identified with the cause of social reform for the poor and working classes and remained effectively united under the leadership of Villeda Morales until the military coup of 1963. By 1970 a serious split had again appeared in the Liberal Party, which had been deprived of most of its power and influence in the course of the rule of President López. After defeat in the 1968 municipal elections, a group of younger and ostensibly more radical Liberal Party members removed old-guard leaders—including former President Villeda Morales—from their party posts.

The National Party

The only other long-lived major party, the National Party, can trace its philosophical origins back to the mid-nineteenth century, but it was not formally organized until 1916. It was almost immediately plagued with serious splits, but one faction, dominated by General Tiburcio Carías Andino, soon overshadowed the rest. From the 1920s onward the party was a closely knit political organization with a clearly outlined program stressing such causes as strict observance of the constitution, free elections, financial reform, better administration, less politics in government, and protection of capital and labor.

Increasing the strength of his party through peaceful political maneuvers, General Carías took the almost unprecedented step of refusing to seize power after winning a plurality (but not a majority) in the presidential election of 1923. This action, one of the first examples of effective party politics in Honduras, greatly increased the prestige of both Carías and his party. By the early 1930s the party had grown so powerful that Carías was able not only to achieve election but also to hold office in relative peace longer than any other Honduran chief of state.

Though the personal political ability of Carías was obviously a major factor, his remarkably long and effective monopoly of political life depended very largely on the unity and strength of his National Party. The party continued to dominate politics after Carías stepped down in 1948, and he himself continued to play an important part in its direction. Serious factionalism broke out after he decided to run for the presidency in 1954, however, paving the way for a victory by the reunited Liberal Party.

It was not until the López government came to power in 1963 that the National Party again became a major political factor. López, though not affiliated with any party, converted the remains of the National Party into a personal political vehicle. The party was still dominant in 1970, but it was divided into three factions, and its future role was uncertain.

Other Parties

Other political parties have emerged from time to time over the past few decades, but most of them have proved short lived. Examples include Abraham Williams's National Reformist movement and Lozano's National Unity Party. Both of these parties amounted to little more than personal organizations of their respective leaders, and both disappeared within a few years of their creation.

Because of the weakness of political organizations and their dependence on personal leaders, extremist doctrines and parties have posed virtually no threat to the nation's traditional political system. No powerful ideological force has ever emerged on the Right and, though a Communist movement exists, the outlawed Communist Party has never possessed significant power.

Interest Groups

Important interest groups include the armed forces, business, and affiliations of students, teachers, and workers. Of these, the military has exercised preponderant influence to a degree where it has at times been hard to determine whether the president of the Republic or the chief of the armed forces were the more powerful.

The Armed Forces

Military influence is derived from the traditional tendency to resort to arms in settling political disputes and the resulting weakness of peaceful mechanisms for maintenance and transfer of power. It also depends heavily on the existence of a reasonably well armed, disciplined, and united military organization. A noticeable rise in the quality of the armed forces after 1948 increased its influence considerably and was an important factor in the military coups of 1956 and 1963 (see ch. 9, Armed Forces and Internal Security).

The Constituent Assembly convoked by the 1956—57 military junta drafted a constitution giving the armed forces a high degree of autonomy. Though it required the chief of the armed forces to take an oath that "We shall never obey orders that violate the letter or spirit of the Constitution," the question of whether the armed forces or the courts were to interpret the constitution in such cases was left unresolved. The document further stated that the chief of the armed forces had direct command of the armed forces and that the president would have to work through him in exercising his function as commander in chief.

It also specified that the military had the right to intervene if the president attempted unconstitutionally to extend his term of office and stated that in the event of a conflict between a president and the armed forces the dispute would be submitted to the legislature for solution.

President Villeda Morales succeeded in countering the powerful military influence for most of his tenure. The 1963 coup and subsequent demise of the Civil Guard, however, returned control to the regular armed forces. The Constitution of 1965, while allowing Congress to regulate the size of the army, maintained the military's highly autonomous position. The lack of any effective restraints other than personal loyalty to the president in 1970 left the armed forces in the position of possible final political arbiter during the transfer of power scheduled for 1971.

Other Interest Groups

Businesses, both domestic and foreign owned, have played a significant but generally indirect role in politics. Traditionally, their influence has stemmed from the need of government to maintain business confidence and therefore to pursue economic policies acceptable to major business concerns. The refusal of President Villeda Morales to adopt such a policy precipitated a major economic crisis arising from the flight of domestic capital and a rapid decline in foreign investment.

In the past the situation was complicated by the existence of two different kinds of business concerns in a position to exert significant influence. On the one hand, there were predominantly Honduran-controlled enterprises and business leaders, most of whose operations were centered in Tegucigalpa. Many of these had a potential for affecting political decisions by using economic power and also by way of family backgrounds, personal friendships, and physical presence in the capital city. On the other hand there were large foreign-owned enterprises, most notably the fruit companies, operating along the north coast and based predominantly in San Pedro Sula. At times the latter tended to dominate life along the Caribbean coast, but their ability to manipulate politics in the capital was marginal; most of their influence was therefore derived from their strong economic position, particularly in the foreign trade sector (see ch. 8, The Economy).

Labor did not exert significant political influence until a spontaneous banana workers' strike for pay increases erupted in 1954. Despite the absence of any effective labor organization, the strike spread rapidly, eventually evolving into a nationwide general strike idling over 25,000 workers in the two major fruit companies and a variety of other enterprises. The impact of the movement was exacerbated by the fact that it occurred in the middle of a bitterly contested presidential election campaign and by the success of the strikers in extracting concessions from the affected firms. The sudden burst of labor activity was the prime motivation behind clauses in the 1957 and 1965 constitutions recognizing the right to strike and extending major benefits to the working class, as well as for the strong prolabor policies of the Villeda Morales government.

Since that time, organized labor, especially along the north coast, has kept fairly constant pressure on the government and major employers alike. Another high point of unrest came in 1968, when government imposition of a 10 to 20 percent consumers' tax sparked a call for a general strike by the Federation of Workers of the North of Honduras. This resulted in official declaration of a thirty-day state of siege with suspension of constitutional guarantees, major disorders in San Pedro Sula, loss of air communication with that city, and deployment of army troops to put down the disturbance. Though these events did not result in a clear victory for either side in the dispute, they emphatically illustrated the continued importance of labor's political role.

Other interest groups that play a peripheral political role include student and teacher organizations (see ch. 7, Education, Culture, and Information). Though the limited size of the nation's academic facilities has indirectly curtailed their political potential, strikes and demonstrations of various kinds have posed significant problems from time to time. In mid-1969, for example, a national teachers' strike evolved out of charges that Ministry of Public Education officials had persecuted teachers opposed to the López government. The movement attracted support from labor and student groups, and the Federation of University Students declared an indefinite general strike. Despite the obvious political potential of such activities, student political groups have generally remained small, divided, and ineffective. The nation's teachers appear less divided but are also less prone to involvement in purely political matters.

The Election Process

Voting is considered a public duty and is technically compulsory, although a fairly large percentage of citizens fail to cast ballots in major elections. The Constitution of 1965 explicitly states that "voting shall be direct and secret" (Article 41) and that "every act whereby participation by a citizen in the political life of the nation is prohibited or limited is declared to be punishable" (Article 42). Registration lists are established through an electoral census that is periodically updated. These provisions and many others of a similar nature are designed to produce free and impartial elections, but they are at variance with longstanding traditions.

The key electoral organization is the National Elections Council, which is in charge of all election proceedings, including supervision of the vote count and declaration of victorious candidates. Other specific duties assigned by the Constitution include registration of political parties and candidates, administration of the national electoral census, nullification of elections, settlement of questions and complaints regarding elections, appointment of the members of departmental electoral boards, and supervision of local electoral boards to see that they meet the conditions prescribed by law. The council is composed of one principal member and one alternate designated by: each legally registered political party; the associations of merchants, industrialists, farmers, and stockraisers; the Honduran Women's Association; the Federation of University Students; professional associations; and labor federations. In the event the council fails to declare the winner of a presidential or congressional contest, that duty devolves upon the national Congress.

At the base of the administrative pyramid are local boards charged with supervising and presiding over elections at the municipal level. The president of the local board is invested by law with authority to maintain order during the elections, and the board itself oversees the casting of ballots. In municipal elections the local board makes one definitive tally of the votes cast, but in national contests the results found by the board are forwarded for review and consolidation to the departmental board, which in turn reports them to the National Elections Council.

The system has often been abused: parties have obstructed registration and voting by their opponents; the faction dominating a locality would not permit opponents to have watchers present at the polling places; election boards exhibited negligence; soldiers or other armed men were present at polling places in violation of the law; and there has sometimes been bloodshed on election day. Other abuses included seizure of polling places by armed persons, denial of the right to a secret ballot, and intimidation of eligible voters before the election. Shortly before the presidential election of 1919, Francisco Bertrand suspended citizenship guarantees, had some 1,500 persons arrested, jailed most of the important political leaders in Tegucigalpa, stopped the nation's press, and carried out the election on schedule with himself as the only candidate (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). Electoral irregularities have at times provided losing candidates with grounds for declaring fraud and embarking on an attempt to overthrow the government by force.

The major reasons for electoral difficulties include the traditional reliance on force in settling disputes and the frequency with which irregular transfers of power have occurred. Another important factor is the so-called spoils system, under which government employees from cabinet minister to janitor are replaced when an opposition party takes control of the federal government. As a result, almost all members of the bureaucracy have a strong, direct vested interest in beating the opposition at the polls, and vast numbers of potential opposition appointees have an almost equally strong interest in defeating the incumbent regime.

National Symbols

The customary symbols assist in creating a spirit of national unity. The flag, adopted after disintegration of the United Provinces of Central America, consists of three horizontal stripes of equal width, the middle one white and the others turquoise blue. In the center are five blue five-pointed stars representing the members of the former federation, four being arranged in a rectangular pattern parallel to the stripes with the fifth in the center of the formation.

The basic feature of the coat of arms is an equilateral triangle placed on a piece of land surrounded by two seas and encircled with the words "Republica de Honduras, Libre Soberana e Independiente 15 de Septiembre de 1821" (Republic of Honduras, Free, Sovereign, and Independent 15 September 1821). Atop the oval lettering is a quiver full of arrows, with pendant horns of plenty joined together by a cord. All of these rest upon a mountain range, where three oaks stand on the right and three pines on the left and where, suitably distributed, are found two mine entrances, a bar, a drill, a wedge, a stone hammer, and a modern hammer. At the center of the design, the base of the triangle displays a volcano between two castles over which a rainbow is shining. Under the rainbow, but behind the volcano, a rising sun is radiating light.

The national anthem, along with the flag and coat of arms, is officially designated a national symbol by the Constitution of 1965. The national flower of Honduras is a white orchid. Public holidays include most of the feast days of the Roman Catholic religion in addition to: January 1, New Year's Day; April 14, Day of the Americas; Holy Week (the five days ending with Easter Sunday); May 1, Labor Day; September 15, Independence Day; October 3, Commemoration of the birth of Francisco Morazán; October 12, Discovery of America; October 21, Army Day; and December 24, 25, and 31,

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Honduras has participated actively in international organizations; as of 1970 the nation belonged to the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of Central American States, and a number of organizations involved with the Central American Common Market. Responding to the call for assistance during the 1965 Dominican crisis, Honduran military contingents participated in the Inter-American Peace Force under OAS auspices. During most of the 1960s the country was also active in the Central American Common Market, registering major increases in trade with other member countries and reaping substantial economic benefits. Its common market activities were curtailed by the 1969 war with El Salvador, however, and it was not clear in mid-1970 when or if extensive participation in the market would be resumed (see ch. 8, The Economy).

Relations with Communist states have been kept to a minimum. President Ramón Villeda Morales outlawed the Communist Party in accord with provisions of the 1957 Constitution and suspended relations with Cuba in April 1961. In 1970 the nation maintained diplomatic relations with no Communist states except Poland and Yugoslavia, which were represented by their respective ministers to Mexico.

Relations with the United States

The United States has enjoyed closer and more extensive relations with Honduras than any other major world power since the mid-nineteenth century, which marked the decline of Great Britain's involvement in Central America (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). By and large the two countries' affairs have been dominated by economic matters. The United States is Honduras' leading trading partner, and many private industries, especially those oriented toward production for export, are owned by United States firms. The largest and most notable of these firms have been two companies operating banana plantations along the northwest coast. Because of their isolated location away from Tegucigalpa, the large-scale activities of these companies created an enclave based around San Pedro Sula that did not appear intimately linked with the rest of the nation's political and economic life.

At least from the beginning of the Carías regime until the 1950s, few political interest groups asserted themselves in the region, leaving day-to-day affairs largely in the hands of the companies' managers and making the north coast operations increasingly unpalatable from the point of view of Honduran nationalists. Partly as a result of this latter sentiment, labor organizations sprang up in the

1950s, large-scale strikes took place, and the Ramón Villeda Morales government adopted a strong prolabor stance.

The only territorial disagreement between the two nations involves claims to the Swan Islands, made up of Great Swan Island, Little Swan Island, and a reef called Booby Cay. These small islets, about ninety-six miles off the Caribbean coast of Honduras, are all less than one mile long. The United States maintains that the islands were not formally claimed by any government until 1870, when a United States citizen claimed them under the Guano Islands Act of 1863. Honduras maintains they belong to her primarily by right of ancient discovery, Columbus reportedly having passed near the islets on his way to Honduras. In 1970 the United States announced that it was prepared to recognize Honduran sovereignty over the Swan Islands, and negotiations were in progress to accomplish this.

Relations with Neighboring States

Common cultural antecedents and colonial heritages, together with geographic proximity, have caused Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and, to an extent, Costa Rica to be closely involved with one another's affairs. In general, Honduras's relations with her three immediate neighbors have taken the form of armed conflict, political intrigue, and boundary disputes as well as persistent efforts to evolve an effective form of political or economic union (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). The decade of the 1960s, marked by the successes of the Central American Common Market and capped by the Salvadorean-Honduran war, illustrates both these contrasting historic trends.

Guatemala

Guatemala occupied a prominent role in Honduran political affairs throughout most of the nineteenth century, first as the capital of the United Provinces of Central-America and later as a dominating force in selection of Honduran presidents. That latter role declined toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, and Guatemala has not exerted great influence on internal Honduran affairs since that time (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). A longstanding boundary dispute between the two countries was amicably settled in 1933. During the 1960s economic affairs and their mutual membership in the Central American Common Market dominated their foreign relations (see ch. 8, The Economy).

Nicaragua

Nicaraguan rulers also exerted great influence over internal Honduran politics, especially toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, but their control ended with the fall of the Dávila government in 1911. Thereafter the issues dominating Honduran-Nicaraguan relations revolved about their mutual, ill-defined northeastern frontier in the region of the Coco River. Arbitration of the longstanding boundary issue resulted in a 1906 award by the king of Spain, but it proved unacceptable to Nicaragua, and the dispute simmered on until the 1950s.

Finally, in 1957 Honduras took action in the area claimed by establishing the department of Gracias a Dios with boundaries following those laid down in 1906. Minor military action by both sides followed, but a cease-fire was arranged about two months after fighting began. Subsequent intensive mediation finally led to an agreement to submit the matter to the International Court of Justice, which in 1960 rendered a decision upholding the 1906 award. Attempts to put the terms of the award into effect ran into difficulty, however, and it was not until mid-1961 that a final solution was arrived at through mediation of the Inter-American Peace Committee of the OAS.

Despite this final settlement, the border remained a delicate and important consideration in the two countries' relations, and minor incidents occurred from time to time. The most significant since 1961 occurred when two persons were slain on the Nicaraguan side of the border. Official apologies from Honduras were reciprocated by Nicaragua's expression of regret for anti-Honduran student demonstrations in Managua, and the issue soon died down.

El Salvador

The war that raged for five days between Honduras and El Salvador in July 1969 was the most serious armed conflict between Latin American states in more than thirty years. It also broke a long tradition of peaceful relations between the two antagonists, which in recent decades had been primarily concerned with maintaining and improving their fairly extensive bilateral trade (see ch. 1, General Character of the Society; ch. 2, Historical Setting; ch. 8, The Economy; ch. 9, Armed Forces and Internal Security).

The principal action centered about the town of Nueva Ocotepeque, many of whose inhabitants fled northward into Guatemala; Salvadorean units also made two other thrusts across the border, one of which succeeded in advancing some twenty-five miles along the Inter-American Highway. Salvadorean airstrikes did little damage, but Honduran strikes did significant damage to a United States-owned oil refinery at the Salvadorean port city of Acajutla.

When war broke out, the council of the OAS immediately invoked the Rio de Janeiro Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (1947) and sent an ambassadorial-level investigating team to assist mediation efforts of the three other Central American states. A cease-fire was arranged on July 19, but El Salvador refused to withdraw its troops unless the safety of Salvadorean nationals living in Honduras was guaranteed.

Finally, on July 16 the OAS convened a meeting of foreign ministers, which threatened to apply economic sanctions if Salvadorean forces were not withdrawn. El Salvador thereupon said it would withdraw, and both countries tentatively agreed to settle their differences by peaceful means. The OAS subsequently mediated the release of all interned civilians in enemy territory, exchange of military prisoners of war, and restoration of telephone communications between the two countries. Nevertheless, diplomatic relations remained broken, trade was stifled, and tensions remained high.

As of mid-1970 the most severe aftereffects of the war appeared to have been economic. Honduras still refused to trade with El Salvador, which had been its major Central American trading partner, and refused to permit Salvadorean goods bound for other countries to pass through Honduran territory. Demolition of the Inter-American Highway bridge crossing the Goascorán River at the Honduran-Salvadorean border, by unknown persons, gave pointed emphasis to these trade problems. There is no doubt that the intense bitterness and nationalistic sentiment aroused in both countries will continue to adversely affect both their relations with each other and the operation of the Central American Common Market (see ch. 8, The Economy).

CHAPTER 7

EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND INFORMATION

In 1970 public education was free, and primary education was compulsory. In the past, widespread poverty had left the vast majority of the population generally indifferent to education, and literacy was low. A public school system has been in existence since 1882, but financial and personnel limitations have restricted its growth and made it accessible to only a limited segment of the population. Since the 1950s, however, the government has devoted considerable effort to expanding and improving the school system, mostly on the primary level, with noticeable results in the growth of the school population and the rise in literacy. School attendance, however, cannot be enforced because of insufficient facilities. Public education was supplemented by private schools, which qualified for government support if they fulfilled the standards set for public schools. Higher education was available at the National University of Honduras and at several special schools, some of which served as regional schools for the whole of Central America.

Artistic and intellectual expression has been limited because poverty has prevented the development of a leisure class devoted to the arts. Vestiges of the Mayan and Spanish colonial heritage of the people are visible in various parts of the country and include some of the best examples of each. Several contemporary artists have achieved renown outside their own country.

Radio constitutes the most effective means of distributing information. Broadcasting stations are many, and radio listening is a popular pastime. Newspaper circulation is low owing to limited literacy. Television is growing in importance, but the absence of relay stations and the high cost of receivers limit its influence to the two main urban centers.

EDUCATION

The Constitution of 1965, in effect in 1970, states that an essential function of the state is to provide education for the preservation, development, and dissemination of culture. Accordingly, the government must maintain a school system providing both general and vocational education and must also promote education outside of schools through libraries, cultural centers, and other means.

The 1961 census stated that 47 percent of the population over the age of ten was literate. This compared with 35 percent in 1950. Literacy in urban areas registered about 20 percent higher than in rural areas. A main contributing factor to low literacy has been the high dropout rate. Approximately 80 percent of the children who enter primary schools never finish.

School attendance was compulsory in 1970 for children between the ages of seven and fifteen. Children excepted were those whose physical or mental handicaps prevented their benefiting from attendance or who lived more than 3 kilometers (1.86 miles) from the nearest school. The residence exception covered a great many rural children.

The Constitution required that public education be free. Many secondary schools, however, were not public schools in the legal sense and therefore charged tuition.

Historical Perspective

During the colonial period, education was in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. A few schools were established, but few clergy were qualified to teach and books were scarce. Private tutors were sometimes employed to educate children in the wealthier and more prominent families.

In the nineteenth century the number of schools increased somewhat, and in 1847 the National University of Honduras was founded. Organized along the lines of a classic Spanish university, it was composed of a central theological faculty, around which were grouped schools of law, medicine, and the humanities.

In 1880 the state acknowledged its responsibility toward public education in a new constitution promulgated that year. The constitution required that the state develop various forms of education, which were to be secular. Primary education was to be free. The public school system was inaugurated in 1882. In addition to supporting its own public school system since then, the state has at various times subsidized church schools and other private institutions. Between 1903 and 1906 several teacher-training schools were established.

Administration and Finance

Administration of the school system is the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Education. It establishes policy, sets standards and curricula, and supervises the operation of schools. Funds for operating existing schools and constructing new ones are allocated by the state, by districts, and by municipalities. By far the heaviest burden is carried by the state, which in 1969 allocated almost 25 percent of the national budget, or over L41 million (2 lempiras equal US$1) to education, more than half of it for primary education. Honduran leaders are proud that the country spends considerably more on education than on defense. Three percent of the net national revenue, exclusive of loans and donations, must be allocated annually for the maintenance and development of the National University, as specified by the Constitution.

Private schools must meet the same requirements and standards as public schools in order to be accredited and must submit to regular inspection. Private schools may qualify for government subsidies, which are also given to schools operated by the departments. In 1969 almost ninety schools received subsidies.

The Constitution requires that scholarships be available for specialized training and that assistance be given to indigent students. It also calls for schools for the handicapped, several of which were being operated in 1970 by charitable organizations with government assistance. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) assists the government in operating a dental and medical service in the schools of Tegucigalpa and a national canteen and welfare service that provides milk, vitamins, and soap to children in various parts of the country.

The United States Agency for International Development (AID) has, over the years, provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Public Education, as have other United States programs, such as the Alliance for Progress. An AID program to standardize textbooks and teaching methods throughout Central America met strong opposition in Honduras, where the books were found devoid of patriotism and nationalism. They were eventually introduced into the school system as supplemental textbooks.

One of the important goals of education stressed in policy statements and laws is the inculcation of patriotism and good citizenship. All teachers of social science must be Honduran by birth, and textbooks must reflect a pride in, and love of, country. This high sense of patriotism has at times hindered effective assistance in the solving of some of the educational problems.

The language of instruction in all public schools is Spanish. Some English-language private schools serve the English-speaking population of the Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía). In common with most other Latin American countries, the school year begins in February and ends in November.

Preprimary and Primary Education

Preprimary schools, both public and private, admitted children at age four and provided a three-year program of preparation for primary school. The children were taught reading and number readiness, simple arts and crafts, songs, and games. An important aim of the program was the socialization of the child, teaching him to accept discipline and learn how to get along with others. Attendance was voluntary. In 1968 eighty-five preschools had a total enrollment of over 6,000 students and a teaching staff of 150. Most of them were located in urban areas, and many were attached to primary schools and teacher-training institutions.

Primary schools provided a six-year course in basic education with some vocational training. Until the early 1960s different curricula were in effect for urban and rural primary schools. In 1970, however, all primary schools followed the same curriculum, but adaptation to local needs was permitted. Thus rural schools emphasized agriculture and preparation for rural life, whereas urban schools provided courses in commercial and industrial training.

Attendance at primary school was compulsory beginning at age seven but, because of the shortage of schools, attendance could not be enforced, particularly in rural areas. Over one-half of the students in primary school in the mid-1960s were two or more years older than the normal age for their grade level. The dropout rate in primary school was extremely high, although it was steadily being reduced. Children dropped out mostly because they were needed to help with family chores or to help support the family. Many dropped out because they or their parents could not see a practical value in what they were being taught in school. The number of this type of dropouts was being continually reduced through revision and modernization of the curriculum and teaching methods.

As a result of the government's construction program for primary schools, enrollment had been increasing rapidly. During the 1969 school year 382,676 children were enrolled in 4,109 primary schools with a teaching staff of 10,614. Almost one-fourth of them dropped out before the end of the year. In that year, however, many of the dropouts were Salvadorean children who left the country with their families as a result of the brief war between Honduras and El Salvador.

In 1969, 30 percent of the primary schools were full six-year schools. The rest were able to offer only a partial primary program. Over 100 of the schools were classed as experimental and were used to develop and test new curricula and teaching methods.

The shortage of textbooks and supplemental reading materials has been a continuing problem. In 1967 the government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiated an experimental school library program, which, in 1969, was joined by several other Latin American governments and expanded into a regional experiment. Under the program UNESCO provides technical assistance and books for the setting up of libraries in primary schools. By 1970 thirty such libraries had been established, fourteen of them in schools in Tegucigalpa and the rest in other parts of the country. Books are especially selected to stimulate the habit of reading. Children may take them home for short periods, thereby encouraging other members of the family to become interested in books. In addition to promoting the library program, the government has also attempted to stimulate the production of textbooks. In 1970, 5 million textbooks were produced for the primary level.

Secondary Education

Secondary education in 1970 was divided into two stages. The first stage comprised a three-year program of general education (*ciclo común de cultura general*), which included courses in language and literature, mathematics, science, music, handicrafts, and a few optional courses, such as typing or a foreign language, usually English. Following completion of the basic program, the student enters the second stage, comprising two to three years of specialized education (*ciclo diversificado*), leading to diplomas in industrial, commercial, or agricultural arts and teacher training or to the *baccaloreat* (baccalaureate) examination, passage of which is a prerequisite for admission to the university. A number of specialized secondary schools, including the National School of Fine Arts and the National School of Music, admit students directly from primary school without having first completed the general stage of secondary school.

Attendance at secondary school is not compulsory, and only 8 percent of the secondary school-age population was enrolled in 1968. To qualify for admission, a student must have reached the age of thirteen and successfully completed primary school. Although enrollment in secondary schools has been rising, the pressure for students to go to work after primary school is great. In addition, since secondary schools are located in urban areas, attendance frequently involves long-distance commuting, which discourages many prospective students.

In 1969, 28,000 students attended some 100 secondary schools. Slightly over 2,000 students graduated at the end of that year. Enrollment at the beginning of the 1970 school year was 35,909.

Secondary education, more than any other type of education, has suffered from outdated curricula and teaching methods, unqualified teachers, and lack of teaching materials and equipment. The government has concentrated its funds and efforts on the improvement and expansion of primary education to the serious neglect of the secondary level. A series of articles in a major Tegucigalpa newspaper in 1970 complained that teaching in secondary schools was done entirely by lecture, with no student participation; that courses were encyclopedic, requiring students to memorize an inordinate amount of facts in order to pass examinations without absorbing much or gaining an in-depth understanding of the subject; and that examinations are extremely difficult and frequently include material that had not been covered in the course. The result, the articles said, was a high rate of failures and dropouts and a lack of motivation toward learning.

New secondary school curricula, syllabi, and methods that might alleviate some of these problems had been tested in 1969 and 1970. In addition, new efforts were being undertaken to upgrade the qualifications of secondary teachers, many of whom are no more than secondary school graduates themselves.

Vocational Education

Most vocational education is acquired by on-the-job training. Primary school curricula include courses in agriculture, animal husbandry, home economics, secretarial skills, and crafts aimed at giving the student a very basic preparation for work. The specialized courses of study at the second level of secondary school qualify graduates to become apprentices in their trade or, in the case of commercial students, to find employment in lower-level positions of commerce and industry.

Advanced vocational education that qualifies graduates for semiprofessional positions is available at the Francisco Morazán Technical Institute in Tegucigalpa, the Social Welfare School, and the Pan American School of Agriculture at Zamorano. The technical institute offers a two-year technical course for graduates of the industrial secondary course who are recommended for the advanced program by their school. The Social Welfare School trains secondary graduates and some primary graduates as social workers and community development leaders.

The Pan American School of Agriculture, founded in 1943 by the United Fruit Company, offers secondary school graduates a three-year course leading to the title of agronomist or livestock expert. It is the most advanced agricultural research and training center in Central America and serves as a regional school under the Superior Council of Central American Universities (Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano—CSUCA). Under an arrangement with the universities of Florida and Louisiana, graduates of the school are accepted for two further years of study, leading to the degree of bachelor of agricultural science.

Higher Education

The National University of Honduras was founded in 1847 and in 1957 was granted complete autonomy. The university is supported by an annual grant from the government, which is augmented by grants from international agencies and private sources within and outside the country. Although grants had considerably increased in the 1960s, financial resources have always been very limited.

The university is governed by a general assembly, composed of representatives of the faculty and students. The general assembly elects the rector and, through a council, administers the university. Each school within the university has its own council, composed of faculty, students, and some alumni, which selects the dean. Students and faculty have equal representation on all governing bodies, which, in the eyes of some observers, has hindered modernizing reforms.

In 1970 the university was composed of: schools of law and social science, economics, medicine, chemistry and pharmacy, odontology, and engineering; a regional center of the north coast that provided a degree program in agriculture and forestry; and the Extension Department. The School of Economics had a branch at San Pedro Sula. Total enrollment at the university in 1968 was 3,000. Students were admitted if they had passed the *baccaloreat* examination. The course of study lasted four to six years, a first year of common general studies including required courses in Spanish, philosophy, and cultural history and one elective in science. At the completion of the course of studies, the student sat for a comprehensive examination to qualify for a degree.

Since most students attend the university only part time while working, they take considerably longer to graduate. Many of them never receive a degree because they do not pass the extremely difficult comprehensive examination. The possession of a university degree represents social status and vouches for the professional competence in a field of study. To qualify for many desirable jobs, however, it is sufficient for an applicant to be enrolled at the university as a part-time student; thus the incentive to obtain a degree is greatly reduced, and the number of students continuing to be enrolled for many years is large.

Nonuniversity higher education was available in 1970 at the Pan American School of Agriculture at Zamorano, the Francisco Morazán Technical Institute in Tegucigalpa, the Francisco Morazán Higher School for Teacher Training in Tegucigalpa, the Social Welfare School, and two schools of nursing attached to the hospitals in La Ceiba and Comayagua.

In the early 1960s all Central American universities joined to organize the Superior Council of Central American Universities (Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano—CSUCA). The organization has a small staff and a secretary general responsible to a joint policy council of representatives from the administration of each university. It is a consultative body promoting the exchange of ideas, pooling of resources, and conducting of research on higher education. Its most important contribution to improved higher education in the region has been the designation of certain schools as regional centers for a particular specialty. The participating countries agree not to establish competing schools and to provide scholarships for their nationals to attend the regional center. Thus, the system enables scarce money, equipment, and talent to be concentrated and utilized more effectively. As of 1970 the regional centers for veterinary medicine and architecture were in Guatemala; for postgraduate medicine, in El Salvador; and for agriculture, in Honduras.

Study abroad, except at a CSUCA regional center, is discouraged by several factors. To begin a career in public service, a degree from the National University is the only one acceptable; study abroad does not count as credit. Those who wish to study abroad anyway are handicapped by a lack of available scholarships and by an academic preparation that frequently does not meet the entrance requirements of institutions abroad.

Although great prestige is attached to a university degree and Hondurans have always been proud of their long-established National University, they have failed to provide sufficient support to enable the university to maintain uniformly high standards. The university, for its part, has tended toward isolation from the rest of society, developing its curriculum without regard to the real needs of the country.

Since the 1960s, however, these attitudes have been changing. The government, the public, and the university itself are increasingly recognizing the role that higher education has to play in economic and social change and are taking steps to enable the university and other institutions of higher learning to fulfill their role. One such step was the creation of the Extension Department at the university for the purpose of getting students and faculty involved in the daily life of the country and applying their expertise and energies toward raising the standard of living of the population. Another step consisted of the changes being instituted since the late 1960s in the programs of study at the various schools, that will modernize them and provide for short-term courses to fill the need for semiprofessional personnel.

Nevertheless, serious problems continued to plague higher education in 1970. Most important was the shortage of funds to furnish the facilities, equipment, library resources, and qualified teachers needed to provide a quality education. The majority of professors were employed professionals who taught a few hours a week. They had little time to develop courses, keep abreast of developments in their fields, and give personal attention to students. The general practice among professors was to develop a series of lectures based on what they themselves had learned while at the university and then to deliver them year after year. In the late 1960s there was indication that this situation was changing when several full-time professors with high qualifications were appointed at a number of schools.

Since part-time students have little time to devote to their education, independent study is not expected, library resources and laboratories are generally not equipped for special research, and many jobs require only a student card instead of a degree, most students have little motivation to do anything other than memorize the facts needed to pass examinations. The expansion and improvement of university facilities, underway in 1970, and a growing interest in independent study were expected in the future to stimulate higher levels of performance among the majority of students.

Teachers

Teachers in the public schools are civil servants. In order to qualify for employment, a person must be Honduran by birth—except teachers with specialized competence, who may be of foreign birth—must have a diploma or certificate indicating completion of a teacher-training course, and must submit testimonials of good moral conduct. Once admitted to the teaching service, teachers have tenure provided their conduct is satisfactory.

Members of the teaching profession enjoy considerable prestige—frequently they are the best educated member of the community—and their salary and conditions of employment have been commensurate with their status. Teachers are entitled to a pension equivalent to one-half of their last remuneration if they have completed five to fifteen years of service, three-fourths of their last remuneration if they have completed sixteen to twenty years of service, and full remuneration if they have over twenty years of service.

Private school teachers must meet the same qualifications as public school teachers if their schools are accredited. If they meet the qualifications, they are also entitled to a state pension under the same conditions.

Primary and preprimary teachers are trained in the teacher-training sections of secondary schools. Secondary school teachers are trained at the Francisco Morazán Higher School for Teacher Training, as are special teachers for rural schools. Teachers in higher education must have a university degree. In practice, however, fewer than half the teachers in 1970 had the required qualifications. Many teachers have never gone beyond the grade that they teach.

In order to upgrade the qualifications of teachers, the government sponsors annual training sessions during the school vacation. Correspondence courses are also available to those teachers who lack a teacher-training certificate. The shortage of fully qualified teachers, however, is expected to continue.

Adult Education

Adult education has been of continual concern to the government. Several private welfare organizations have sponsored literacy campaigns in specific areas, and the government's rural development program includes the teaching of reading and writing. In addition, the primary school system operates special schools for adults. The *escuela suplementaria* (supplemental school) provides three years of basic education to adults with no formal schooling, and the *escuela complementaria* (complementary school) provides two years of more advanced training to adults who have completed the supplemental school or three years of regular primary education.

CULTURE

Pre-Columbian Heritage

The western half of Honduras has yielded some of the oldest known articles of human creativity in Central America. At the village of Yarumela on the Humuya River and at Playa de los Muertos on the Ulúa River were found fragments of clay pottery, clay figurines, and personal ornaments estimated to date back to the second millennium B.C. The oldest of the objects are crude and unadorned, but later ones show the evolution of more sophisticated production techniques and of experimentation with decoration. They are believed to have been made by the predecessors of the Maya, whose great civilization covered the same western part of the country.

Findings at other Honduran sites in the Humuya and Ulúa river regions have enabled scholars to piece together the evolution of Mayan culture, whose highest achievements are visible in the ruins of the great city of Copán in the far western part of the country. At the height of their development in the fifth century A.D., the Maya were producing architectural structures and sculptures of a complex nature and had developed scientific and intellectual knowledge further than many of their contemporary cultures. Mayan hieroglyphs remain largely undeciphered, but those that are known attest to an advanced knowledge of astrology and mathematics; mathematics is also demonstrated in the engineering techniques needed to erect most of the large Mayan structures.

The Mayan system of numbers used nineteen numbers and a zero instead of the decimal system of nine numbers and a zero. The system included the idea of numerical placement and used a symbol for the completion of a count. The earliest numbers were expressed by dots and bars, but after the third century A.D. numerals were also expressed through nineteen distinct sketches of human heads.

With the system of numerical placement, the Maya were able to express large numbers in a much simpler way than their Roman contemporaries.

The great city of Copán was discovered in 1839 in dense jungle and has since been restored. It is believed to have been the center of Mayan learning and a great religious center. The main part of the city covers twelve acres of temples, pyramids, terraces, and commemorative sculptures. It includes a large ball court, where ceremonial games were played with a small rubber ball long before rubber was known anywhere else in the world.

The profusion of high-relief sculpture on the buildings and the many stelae differ from those found at other Mayan sites. They are figurative rather than stylized, faces being shown frontally rather than in profile. In addition, at no other site is the statuary as completely integrated in the architectural whole as at Copán. The structures and the sculpture are composed of large blocks of green trachyte, a volcanic rock. The quarrying and transportation of the stone as well as the erection of the structures required tremendous manpower and superior engineering skill.

Colonial Heritage and Early Independence

The Spanish colonial heritage is most visible in the architecture of the churches and old public buildings. Although classic Moorish and Spanish Gothic styles are represented, the best examples of colonial architecture are in the Baroque style, which was popular in Europe in the seventeenth century. It is distinctive by its great ornamentation both on the facade and in the interior. The statuary and carvings of the interior were frequently heavily gilted. In transplanting Baroque architecture to Honduras, however, several adaptations to local conditions were made. The most apparent was the use of thick walls and stubbly, wide towers to withstand earthquakes, features that distinguish Spanish-American from other Baroque architecture. Another was the use of palm leaves and other tropical fruits and flowers in the decorative designs. Decorations, with a few exceptions, were less lavish in Honduras than in some of the richer Spanish colonies.

Honduran church style is distinct from most other Central American Baroque in the use of rusticated or beaded pilasters. The most superb colonial building in the country is the Cathedral of Comayagua, which ranks as one of the important examples of colonial architecture in all of Latin America.

In addition to the architectural heritage of the colonial period, Hondurans point with pride to the intellectuals and writers of the colonial and early independence period who have taken their place in Latin American cultural history. José Cecilio del Valle (1780–1834)—writer, politician, and philosopher—was the most influential intellectual of the colonial era. He is credited as being the earliest advocate of Pan-American unity. Another poet and intellectual of that period was Father José Trinidad Reyes, who founded the Society of the Spirit of the Enterprise and Good Taste in 1845, which later became the National University of Honduras.

A poet of considerable reputation both at home and in other parts of Latin America is Juan Ramón Molina (1875-1909), whose works were published in a volume entitled *Tierras, Mares y Cielos* (Lands, Seas and Skies). He belonged to the school of Latin American modernist poets who, in the 1890s, became the first group of Latin American artists to regard themselves as separate from the rest of society and who dedicated themselves purely to art. In late 1970 a committee was formed in Tegucigalpa for the erection of a monument to Juan Ramón Molina as an outstanding Honduran intellectual.

Molina's contemporary Froylán Turcios was a poet, novelist, and short story writer whose works include *Cuentos del Amor y de la Muerte* (Stories of Love and Death), *Flores del Almendro* (Flowers of the Almond Tree), *Páginas de Ayer* (Pages of Yesterday), *El Vampiro* (The Vampire), and *Fantasma Blanco* (The White Phantom).

Folklore, legend, and nature have been popular subjects of Honduran writers and poets in the past.

Contemporary Artistic and Intellectual Expression

The Honduran artist or intellectual often lacks an adequate public to support his creative efforts. Most of the population is either insufficiently educated to be interested in literature and art or is too poor to support it. Therefore, most artists must work at other occupations. Writers usually limit their efforts to poetry and short stories that can be published in newspapers and periodicals because the cost of publishing a book far exceeds the possible return from sales. Many artists and intellectuals leave the country, going usually to Mexico, Spain, or the United States, where they can find both intellectual companionship and stimulation as well as a larger public for their work.

Those Honduran contemporary artists and writers who have achieved a degree of success and renown have done so outside their own country. Usually, however, they return home from time to time, often in connection with an exhibit or new publication of their work.

Contemporary artistic and intellectual expression draws mainly on the Spanish colonial heritage and on contemporary trends in other parts of the world. The pre-Columbian heritage finds expression mainly in some of the Indian crafts and probably in some of their ceremonial dances. It is also increasingly visible in decorative designs of various kinds, including architectural decoration. A large new hotel that was opened in Tegucigalpa in 1970 reflects Mayan influences in its exterior by appearing to be constructed of large stone blocks and by being decorated with strips of Mayan hieroglyphs. The dominant style of the building, however, is modern, utilizing much glass, as do other contemporary buildings in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. One further example of Mayan influence is the Concordia Park in Tegucigalpa, whose design is intended to reflect Mayan traditions.

The development of contemporary art and artists has centered on the National School of Fine Arts in Comayagüela, founded in 1940 and subsidized by the government, and the National School of Arts and Crafts in Tegucigalpa, founded by artist Arturo López Rodezno. A prominent graduate of the National School of Fine Arts is the landscape artist Carlos Garay, whose paintings have been exhibited in the United States, West Germany, Mexico, Peru, and throughout Central America.

Two artists whose success was achieved abroad were Alvaro Canales and Miguel Angel Ruiz Matute. In 1970 Canales had been living and painting in Mexico for over thirty years. He had been artistic director of the Mexican magazine *Variedades Artísticas de México* and had painted a large mural in a Tegucigalpa bank. Most of the themes of his paintings were on social commentary.

Ruiz Matute was a student of Diego Rivera, whose influence is seen in his early paintings. Considered an outstanding muralist and artist, Ruiz Matute has received many fellowships to study abroad and has won several prizes for his works. In the late 1960s he experimented with various styles and forms of expression. Another contemporary artist is José Antonio Velázquez, whose primitive paintings of the small town of San Antonio de Oriente have met with great commercial success.

Among contemporary poets and writers best known on a wider scale are Rafael Helliodoro Valle and Clementina Suarez. Helliodoro Valle established a reputation throughout Latin America with his poetry and with his six-volume study of the annexation of Central America to Mexico. Clementina Suarez has published two volumes of her poetry in Honduras and has had her poems published in Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Cuba. She is publisher of *Mujer*, a women's magazine in Tegucigalpa, and has founded the first art gallery in the country. Her personal collection of paintings is considered the most valuable collection of Central American artists. The works of poet Oscar Acosta and writer Orlando Henriquez are included in the *First Anthology of Latin American Science Fiction*, published in Buenos Aires in 1970.

Contemporary music is a combination of traditional songs and dances, mostly reflecting the Spanish heritage of the people, and of modern popular music. Traditional songs and dances are not distinguishable from those of the rest of Central America. Many of them utilize the rhythms of the flamenco or pasodoble, but some are similar in rhythm and feeling to the Alpine music of southern Germany. Those with lyrics are mostly romantic ballads and sentimental songs of love and patriotism. Preferred instruments are the guitar, the accordion, and, almost always, the marimba, a xylophone-type instrument typical of Central America.

Some of the more remote Indian groups have kept alive their own traditional music and dances for ceremonial and ritual occasions. The music is highly rhythmic, utilizing drums, bamboo flutes, and gourd rattles. Some of the dances are very complicated, and their execution is taught by father to son.

The Black Caribs have also maintained their distinctive musical traditions. Their music and dance clearly reflect both their African and Indian heritages. Song and rhythm form a vital part of Black Carib life. In addition to the traditional religious and ceremonial music, work songs are improvised for almost any activity in daily life. Most of the music is chanted in unison, with or without a rhythmic accompaniment of drums, rattles, and flutes. Dances frequently have only instrumental accompaniment.

Modern popular music follows the trends set in other parts of Latin America and the United States. In 1970 protest songs were gaining in popularity. Popular music is played over the radio and in clubs and dancehalls. A major adaptation to Central American tastes and traditions is the inevitable inclusion of the marimba in the performing orchestra. Rafael Coello Ramos is a highly regarded composer of popular dance music and of school songs.

Band music has been extremely popular in the past, although its popularity is giving way to modern popular music. Most of the larger towns have their municipal band that performs in the public square on Sundays and holidays.

The National School of Music was founded in 1952 in Tegucigalpa under the direction of violinist Humberto Cano. It trains music teachers for the school system as well as performing musicians and composers.

The country's most prominent composer, Manuel de Adalid y Gamero, died in the 1940s. An organist, orchestra director, and teacher, as well as a composer, his best known composition is *Una Noche en Honduras* (A Night in Honduras), a symphonic poem.

Research and study of any kind have been severly limited by the shortage of funds. Some applied research into problems of agriculture is conducted at the Pan American School of Agriculture, and a very limited amount of applied and pure research has been undertaken by gifted students at the National University. Little of this work, however, is ever published or becomes known beyond the borders of the country.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Constitution of 1965 guarantees freedom of expression with certain limitations and prohibits the closing down of any source of public information or the confiscation of its property. If an offense is committed, the author of the statement, not the medium through which it has been distributed, is liable. The Constitution also prohibits the subsidizing of any source of public information, such as a radio station or newspaper, by a foreign government or foreign political party. Newspapers and radio and television stations must be controlled by Hondurans, and their news and editorials must be edited exclusively by Hondurans.

In 1970 all the public information media were considered to operate under complete freedom within the restrictions imposed by civil law in such matters as libel and slander.

Radio was by far the most effective public information medium because of low literacy and poor transportation. The press was influential mainly in the capital and the larger towns.

Most sources of public information were privately owned and operated. The government had active programs involving free distribution of news items, films, and exhibits and the presentation of cultural programs. The most important of these were those sponsored by the governments of West Germany, France, and the United States.

The Press

In 1970 the country had four daily newspapers with a total daily circulation of 54,000 copies. Dailies were circulated throughout the country by truck, bus, and airplane. Fifteen weekly newspapers, with a total circulation of some 30,000 copies, served their respective localities.

In addition, some eleven periodicals were published by individuals and organizations. They included both general interest and special interest periodicals. No figures were available on their circulation. The best known periodical in 1970 was *Honduras Ilustrada* (Honduras Illustrated), a literary magazine published since 1965. Of considerable influence was *El Sindicalista* (The Tradeunionist), a twice-monthly labor newspaper published in La Lima. Foreign newspapers and periodicals were not readily available.

The most important dailies were *El Día* (The Day), with a conservative editorial policy; *El Cronista* (The Chronicle), the oldest newspaper, whose editorial policy was independent; and *La Prensa* (The Press), whose editorial policy was liberal. They carried few news bulletins; most of their space was devoted to signed commentary and editorials, much of it in the form of political polemics. The front page usually carried the most important local, national, and international news, which was continued on inside pages. A page or more each was usually devoted to sports, social notes, and editorials. Advertising took up considerable space. *El Día* published a twelve-page full format edition in 1970.

All newspapers have suffered continually from poor production and antiquated equipment. In the early 1960s *El Cronista* was the only newspaper with a rotary press. Since then, *El Día* has modernized its equipment to accommodate a twelve-page edition. The cost of production is very high, and, given the limited circulation, all newspapers have a precarious existence.

The quality of journalism has been decried by both publishers and reporters. There is no school of journalism, but the Honduran Press Association has encouraged and supported various programs of professional education for its members. Journalists, however, are handicapped by the economic conditions of their business, which forces many of them to work at other jobs in order to support themselves and therefore limits their time for gathering and preparing news. They are also handicapped by the political nature of journalism, which not only impinges on their creativity and objectivity but also seriously limits their employment possibilities, since no newspaper will hire a reporter who has been associated with another one advocating an opposing political view. A 15- to 25-percent commission on advertisements secured for the newspaper by the reporter also tends to limit his objectivity in reporting and the time spent in looking for news rather than advertisements.

Publishing

Publishing suffers from the same problems of high cost and low sales that affect the press. Six publishing firms were active in the mid-1960s: the National Press and Ariston, both owned by the government; the privately owned Calderón Press, La República, and Suárez y Romero in Tegucigalpa; and the National Publisher (Editora Nacional), in San Pedro Sula. Their combined output in 1962 was 189 titles, 161 of which were first editions. A high percentage of the output were pamphlets and small soft-cover books. Almost half of the titles dealt with the social sciences and included government publications of various types.

The two major publishers, Calderón and La República, had in the mid-1960s modern equipment that was capable of producing almost any kind of printed matter, including some high-quality editions. The costs of production, however, were extremely high, since the market could only absorb a small run of any one title and sales were limited by the custom of authors giving away their books free.

In 1954 the government created the National Institute of Books, affiliated with the National University for the purpose of producing and distributing at low cost learned and literary works by Honduran authors. By the mid-1960s, however, the institute was still inactive.

Locally published and imported books and other printed matter were obtainable in eight bookstores—four in Tegucigalpa, two in Comayagüela, and one each in San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba.

The National Library in Tegucigalpa had an estimated 55,000 volumes in the mid-1960s and was visited by approximately 30,000 readers annually. Four other public libraries held a total of 12,000 volumes and served approximately 25,000 readers annually. The library of the National University had 5,000 volumes, and nine specialized libraries had a total of 23,000 volumes.

Radio and Television

In 1969 sixty radio stations were broadcasting in all of the more populous parts of the country over mediumwave and shortwave frequencies. In addition, five frequency modulation (FM) stations were broadcasting in areas of highest population density. All stations were privately owned, and all but four were commercially operated, deriving their revenue from advertisements. The four noncommercial stations were operated by religious denominations: La Voz Evangélica in Tegucigalpa by a Protestant mission, and Radio Católica, with an amplitude modulation (AM) station in La Ceiba and both an AM and FM station in Tegucigalpa, by the Roman Catholic Church. Their programming was almost entirely cultural. All the radio programs were in Spanish except La Voz Evangélica, which broadcast all of its programs except the news in English.

Sources differed on total transmission power, but it was between 144.0 and 174.8 kilowatts, approximately one-fourth of which was in shortwave transmission. Fewer than ten stations were stronger than 5 kilowatts. The number of radio stations increased from twenty-three in 1959 to fifty-one in 1963. The new stations were mostly low-power local stations owned and operated by one individual.

Much of the program material used by the various radio stations is supplied by the United States Information Agency and similar foreign information and cultural organizations in the form of taped news programs, commentary, and special feature programs.

An estimated 290,000 receivers in 1970 reached a wide audience, since a high percentage of them were located in public places where groups of people gathered to listen. Even receivers located in private homes usually reached an audience larger than the inhabitants of the home.

Radio Havana was easily audible in all parts of the country, and several other Central American stations could be heard in some parts of the country.

Two television networks were in operation in 1970. Radiotelevisora Hondureña, S.A. (Honduran Radio Television Company) had two stations, one in Tegucigalpa and one in San Pedro Sula, as well as a repeater in Siguatepeque. Radio Centro y la Voz de Honduras (Radio Central and Voice of Honduras) had a station in Tegucigalpa and one in San Pedro Sula. A third local station was located in Tegucigalpa. Both networks and the independent station were privately owned and derived their revenue from advertising.

The programming on all stations depends heavily on feature films, cartoons, and serials from the United States. Few programs are transmitted live. The stations of the Radiotelevisora Hondureña, S.A., broadcast some educational programs and special interest programs, including religious services and sports events.

An estimated 17,000 receivers in 1970 were located mostly in and around the two main cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Many of the receivers were in public places.

Motion Pictures

There was no Honduran film industry in 1970. Approximately 300 films were imported annually during the 1960s, mostly from the United States but also from Mexico, Argentina, France, and the United Kingdom. Newsreels came mostly from the United States and the United Kingdom.

Sixty theatres in 1970 were equipped to show 35-mm and 16-mm films. Their total seating capacity was estimated at 42,000. Attendance at films in the mid-1960s was 2.5 million annually. Some schools show educational films utilizing films and equipment lent by the United States Information Agency.

CHAPTER 8

THE ECONOMY

The economy as of mid-1970 was basically agricultural with a well-defined export sector. Industrial development was beginning to grow in importance. The government has been playing an active role in the economy since 1950. The banking system is a combination of government-owned and private (including foreign) banks. Credit and monetary policies are conservative. The public debt, once almost nonexistent, is rising rapidly as the government increases its expenditures for public works infrastructure projects.

The country's gross national product (GNP) grew by an average annual rate of 4.9 percent between 1961 and 1968, about the same rate as the average for all of Latin America but less than the government's target of 6.6 percent. In 1968 the rate was almost 8 percent, one of the highest in the country's history, the export sector being the most dynamic part of the economy. The momentum of 1968 carried into 1969; that year at first appeared to be even better than 1968, but the war with El Salvador in July and a hurricane in September, followed by heavy rains in October, curtailed the rapid growth and were expected to have an adverse effect for the next few years.

The exact increase in 1969 was variously estimated to be between 3.5 percent and 6.0 percent, and total GNP was estimated at L1,300 million (2 lempiras equal US$1), or the equivalent of US$650 million. Another estimate was that the 1970 GNP would grow by about 5 percent.

During the 1961–68 period per capita GNP increased by an annual average rate of 1.5 percent but, because of the war and adverse weather conditions in 1969 plus inflation and population growth, the rate of increase in 1969 was only 1.2 percent. Per capita income in 1969 was estimated to be the equivalent of US$242, ranking the country fifteenth in per capita GNP in Latin America.

Agriculture is the largest component of the economy, contributing about 38 percent to the GNP. Agriculture includes forestry, hunting, and fishing activities. Bananas are the most important agricultural product, followed by cereals, grains, and livestock. Manufacturing is the second largest component of GNP with about 16 percent. It is the fastest growing sector; production averaged an

11-percent increase annually during the 1961–68 period and over 8 percent in 1969. Commerce contributes 13.5 percent to GNP; transportation and communications, slightly over 6 percent; miscellaneous services, about 6 percent; and construction, almost 5 percent. Mining, utilities, banking, and public administration make up the balance of GNP. The north coast of the country is the most important economic region, producing between 35 and 40 percent of the GNP.

About 60 percent of the economically active persons are engaged in agriculture, either on their own farms or as wage earners for others. A large percentage of the work force, 38 percent, is self-employed, including farmers.

Agricultural growth has been hindered by inadequate transportation (many areas are accessible only by airplane), credit scarcity, lack of marketing services, and variable climatic conditions. Domestic food production, nevertheless, is sufficient to meet needs, and the country exports whatever surplus production occurs.

Bananas and coffee are the two major export crops and account for about 60 percent of all exports by value, bananas representing almost 50 percent. The banana industry is dominated by two large foreign-owned companies, but the coffee industry is composed of more than 40,000 small and medium-sized farms.

The industrial segment of the economy is the smallest in Central America but has been one of the most dynamic. An industrial development law that provides numerous fiscal benefits, coupled with the larger market provided by the country's membership in the Central American Common Market, have been the stimuli for this development.

The monetary authority is the Central Bank of Honduras, which sets monetary and credit policy. Government budgets are moderate, but capital expenditures have been less than planned because of a lack of skilled public administrators, managers, and technicians. The currency, whose basic unit is the lempira, is one of the most stable in the world.

GOVERNMENT ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT

The government's role in the economy has been growing since 1950. Until then, the state had left almost all economic development to private enterprise and had provided little or no guidance. For example, before 1944 there was no government ministry involved with agriculture, the dominant sector of the economy. In 1950 both the Central Bank of Honduras and the National Development Bank (Banco Nacional de Fomento—BNF) were created. The Central Bank controls monetary and fiscal policy and by its regulation of credit can direct the flow of commercial bank loans to areas the government is attempting to encourage or stress. The National Development Bank, called the most important public institution for economic development in the country, is an autonomous institution combining planning and research with investment in specific projects.

Overall economic planning is the responsibility of the National Superior Planning Council, created in 1955 (originally entitled the National Economic Council) to coordinate efforts of all government institutions. The council is headed by the minister of economy, and its other members are the minister of communications and public works, the minister of natural resources, the president of the Central Bank, the president of the National Development Bank, and two representatives of private industry. The council prepares development plans, proposes legislation in the economic field, recommends tax reforms, reviews the budget, and approves foreign loans.

Since 1955 various development plans have been prepared, all of which feature four main goals: agricultural development, infrastructure development, industrial development for import substitution, and development of human resources. The first plan was a tentative five-year plan for the 1955–60 period, prepared by a committee that preceded the creation of the National Economic Council. That plan was amended in 1956 by the council to provide for smaller expenditures in line with government revenues, and it was pushed forward another year to 1961. The plan was again amended in 1957 to cover the 1958–62 period and recommended a total of L292 million to be spent, about half of it for highways and education.

During the 1963–64 period a two-year interim plan was followed while the council prepared a major five-year plan for the 1965–69 period. Only about half the goals of the 1963–64 plan were achieved. The 1965–69 plan foresaw total public investment of over L480 million, of which 51 percent would go for transportation and energy (new highways and generating plants); almost 21 percent for education, health, and housing; over 17 percent for agriculture and industry; and the balance to be spent on miscellaneous projects. The amount for agriculture, some L65 million, was to go for irrigation, farm roads, and farm credits. Almost 60 percent of the total planned public investment of L480 million was to have come from external sources. In addition, the plan projected private investment during the same period at L634 million.

Although the government made relatively heavy investments, the targets of the 1965–69 plan, as those of previous plans, were not met. Overall, less than 40 percent of projected investments were made, although in 1969 over 65 percent of planned investment for that year was achieved. The difficulties in not reaching planned investment were not because of lack of financing, as is often the case in other countries. Sufficient external financing was available to the country, but a lack of qualified persons to carry out the program and internal institutional problems prevented the goals from being reached. The country has few persons adequately trained in public administration.

Before the termination of the 1965–69 plan, a complementary plan, called an action plan, was prepared for the 1968–71 period. The complementary plan contemplated that the government would place its emphasis on the development of the southern part of the country, leaving most of the development of the north to private enterprise, where such effort was already concentrated. This complementary plan was later modified by the Program of Public Investment 1970–74, which emphasized short-term priority projects. The cost of financing the projects during the 1970–74 period totaled L566 million, of which amount almost L400 million would have to be raised from outside loans. Of this latter amount, almost L159 million had already been contracted by mid-1960.

Two government ministries, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Communications and Public Works, are deeply involved in economic development. The Ministry of Natural Resources carries out projects in agriculture, natural resources development, livestock, irrigation, and forestry. The expenditures of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works represent the largest percentage of the annual budget, most of the expenditures going for new highways. Other government agencies playing an economic role are the National Agrarian Institute, the National Railroad, and the National Electric Energy Company. The electric company provides over 80 percent of all electricity generated in the country.

In an effort to promote industrialization of the country, the government has been granting benefits to new or expanding industries since 1958. In that year the Industrial Development Law was passed, which was amended in 1966. Under that law all industry was classified into one of three categories, and each category received certain benefits, such as exemption from income taxes for a number of years, from sales taxes, and from import and export duties. About 200 firms either initiated or expanded operations under the provisions of the law. In 1969 the Industrial Development Law was superseded by a Central American fiscal incentives agreement designed to end the competition for new industries between the members of the Central American Common Market by offering a common set of incentives. The agreement, however, permits Honduras to offer up to 20-percent greater incentives than the other members because of its relative industrial weakness. For example, whereas the other countries can offer a ten-year incentive for a tax reduction, Honduras can offer twelve years.

AGRICULTURE

Land Use and Practices and Agrarian Reform

About one-half of the total land area of 27.7 million acres is forested, some of which is being exploited for timber and lumber. Between 31 and 38 percent of the land area is considered suitable only for pasture. Potentially arable land amounted to only slightly over 4 million acres. Of the roughly 2 million acres actually under cultivation in 1970, a large portion was classified as unsuitable for crop raising.

Land tenancy is characterized by many small holdings and a few very large holdings. The larger farms are found on the Caribbean lowlands. About 30 percent of the land is owned by the government; of this land some is being worked. There are an estimated 190,000 farms in the country, but 75 percent of them are under 25 acres in size. A 1966 estimate indicated that nearly 27,000 farms were less than 3 acres in size. About 4 percent of the farms are over 100 acres, but this small percentage of farms covers more than half of all farmland. The largest single landholder in the country is the Standard Fruit Company, with several properties totaling 250,000 acres. On the large farms only a small percentage of the land is under cultivation, the largest percentage being idle or in pasturage. The balance of the farms are between 25 and 100 acres and may be termed medium sized. Nevertheless, land is distributed more fairly than in the rest of Central America.

Only about 21 percent of farms are worked by the owners, but the average size of farms operated by owners is almost 90 acres. The largest percentage of farms, about 34 percent, are worked by *ejidatarios*, farmers who work municipal land called *ejido*. Each municipality has the right to about 8,750 acres of national land, and each hamlet of at least 100 inhabitants has the right to 4,000 acres. Each resident may be given the lifetime use of up to 60 acres of this land. The average size farm being operated in 1970 by *ejidatarios* was less than 30 acres. Together, all the municipalities own about 17 percent of the land in the country.

About 11 percent of the farms are operated by squatters who have no legal title to the land they are working, which is usually national land. The average size of a squatter's farm is about twenty acres. Nine percent of the farmers are tenants who pay the owner of the land a fixed rent in money or kind. A smaller number, about 4 percent, are sharecroppers who give the landowner a proportion of the crop, ranging from one-fourth to one-half, in return for the use of the land. An equal percentage, about 4 percent, are agricultural workers who work and live on large farms and are permitted to farm a part of the employers' land for themselves as part of their salary. These farmers are known as *colonos*. The balance of the farms, 17 percent, are operated in a mixed form of tenancy. There are over 200 cooperatives, with a total membership of about 14,000 farmers. There are an estimated 64,000 agricultural laborers who do not have any land. Farms operated by tenants, sharecroppers, and *colonos* are smaller than farms operated by squatters. The average size of a tenant's farm is almost fifteen acres; and that of sharecroppers and *colonos*, about five acres. The farms with a mixed form of tenancy are much larger, averaging about forty-five acres.

The main crops grown are bananas, coffee, tobacco, cotton, sugar, corn, beans, rice, and sorghum. Corn is the principal food crop, followed by sorghum, beans, and rice. About 50 percent of the corn and 60 percent of the sorghum, rice, and beans are raised on small farms of less than 25 acres. Bananas are raised on large plantations but plantains, starchy bananas used for cooking, are raised on small farms. About one-third of the coffee production comes from small farms, whereas all cotton is grown on farms over 500 acres in size.

Most of the farmers use techniques and practices that usually exhaust the fertility of the soil. The small farmer does not practice soil conservation or prevent erosion. Many crops are grown on slopes where erosion occurs. In general, soils are low in phosphorus although high in potash. Commercial fertilizers are seldom used, and animal and human manure is more common. Less than 20,000 metric tons of commercial fertilizers are consumed annually. Crop rotation is not practiced. When the yield of a plot starts to diminish, it is left fallow. Another plot is worked until it too starts to diminish in yield, and then the farmer returns to work the first plot. There is very little mechanization throughout the country. Handtools are used on almost all farms. For the country as a whole there is one plow for every four farms. Seventy-seven percent of the farmers use a machete to dig up the soil and a stick to sow the seed. Pesticides are used only on the largest farms. In the mid-1960s only about 153,000 acres were under irrigation, irrigation construction, or planning for irrigation schemes. Most of the irrigated land was on large plantations growing bananas, sugar, and cotton.

Only about 10 percent of the farmers can obtain bank credit. The principal source of bank credit is the National Development Bank. Most farmers, however, must resort to moneylenders or merchants for credit needs, at higher rates of interest.

The government agricultural extension service is a small autonomous agency, with about one agent for every 5,000 farmers. The agricultural extension service concentrates its activities in a few areas and is designed to increase the production of corn, beans, cattle, and hogs. Research is done at the National Agriculture Center at Comayagua. This center works on improving corn varieties and cattle breeding.

Technical training for farmers is provided at the Pan American School of Agriculture and the Farm Demonstration School. The Pan American School of Agriculture, located on 5,000 acres of land at Zamorano, twenty miles from Tegucigalpa, provides a three-year course for students from all over Latin America. The largest number of students usually are Hondurans, but most of the graduates do not return to farming; rather, they go to work for the government. The Farm Demonstration School, operated by the Ministry of Agriculture at Catacamas, also provides a three-year course and is open to any student who has at least a sixth-grade education.

There have been a number of agrarian laws throughout the country's history, all designed to encourage wider land ownership. The first land law dates from 1829 and provided for the sale of former royal lands to private citizens, with a limitation on the amount to be purchased by an individual. In 1837 a law permitted the government to give individuals land in payment for loans and to pay the salaries of public officials with land. New laws also made it easier for poor farmers to acquire land and for municipalities to be granted land. After 1872 anyone who worked unoccupied national land for three years became the owner with legal title. An 1888 law, amended in 1898 and 1902, provided for an inexpensive system of surveying and title granting of government land to be sold to farmers. An agrarian law in 1924 became part of the constitution and recognized all previous methods of acquiring land. It also permitted the granting of fifty-acre plots to each rural family. This law with some liberal amendments remained in effect until 1962, when a new comprehensive agrarian reform law was passed. The 1962 law with later amendments was still in effect in late 1970.

The 1962 law was designed to establish a fair system of land ownership, tenure, and use because, despite the progress made in agrarian reform over the years, there were still increasing numbers of landless rural workers. The new law created the National Agrarian Institute (Instituto Nacional Agrario—INA), an autonomous agency responsible for carrying out the reform provisions. The National Agrarian Council was also created, which is a five-member advisory body setting basic policy, which INA carries out. The law forbids the sale of municipal or national land to individuals, except that those persons who worked national land for more than five years before 1962 are entitled to that land. Private land may be expropriated or purchased for distribution to landless farmers. Expropriated lands must be paid for in cash or bonds. From 1963 through 1968 INA had expropriated almost 48,000 acres, had purchased more than 200,000 acres, and had made distribution of 25- to 50-acre plots to over 5,000 families.

Another major area in which INA operates is in new settlements on national land. These settlements may be operated individually or on a cooperative basis. The largest such project is the Aguán Valley settlement, which is designed to have eventually about 6,000 families on 173,000 acres. INA also encourages the formation of rural marketing cooperatives. A community development program is also in effect. This is designed to give advice and assistance on self-help projects, such as community wells, repair of schools, or street improvements. Beneficiaries of land reform are also entitled to inexpensive government credit for their production needs.

A major section of the 1962 law provided for taxation on uncultivated land. This was designed to encourage cultivation of idle land on large estates. The tax increases progressively every year to a maximum of 40 percent of value until the owner is forced to either work the land or sell it. This provision was suspended from 1965 to 1969, when it was again enforced. Another article of the 1962 law limited the use of national land to native-born Hondurans. This was not enforced until 1969, at which time many Salvadoreans were evicted from land they had worked. The evictions contributed to the 1969 war with El Salvador.

The INA had been hampered in carrying out many of its responsibilities by a lack of funds and trained personnel. Further, almost 45 percent of its budget had been spent on administrative costs. A L30-million bond issue in 1969, however, brought in funds to finance its operations for the next several years.

Crop Production

Using the average annual production of the 1952—56 period as a base, in 1966 total agricultural production had increased by 151 percent, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. Between 1952 and 1966 food production increased at an average annual rate of 3.1 percent, which was the same rate of increase for the population during this period. The rate of increase for agricultural production in 1967 was only 2.5 percent but rose to 7.8 percent in 1968. Both total and per capita production, however, dropped in 1969 to below the 1965 level. The government had set a goal of 4.6 percent for the 1965—69 average, a figure which was not reached. Most production is not mechanized, and few modern techniques are used. The average output per acre is low.

Bananas

The banana industry is the leading export industry and the principal area of foreign investment. Bananas were first produced and exported during the 1860s by a small number of planters on the Bay Islands (Islas de la Bahía) and along the Atlantic coast. By 1970 bananas accounted for about 50 percent of total exports, and the country was the world's second banana producer after Ecuador. In previous years bananas had been even more important as a foreign exchange earner, but the industry has declined in importance since the mid-1940s. It is the most technically advanced sector of the economy, and relatively fewer persons are dependent upon it for a livelihood than on other agricultural pursuits. Banana workers, however, receive higher wages and more social benefits, such as schools, housing, and health services, than workers in other industries. There are two major producers, both of whom are United States companies, plus several thousand small growers. The two United States firms, Standard Fruit and United Fruit, arrived in the early years of the twentieth century to start their own plantations after years of purchasing fruit from independent growers. They have made major investments since 1961, improving the marketing and processing operations, and have succeeded in planting disease-resistant varieties. In the early years of the century the two companies exerted more economic influence over the country than they have since the mid-1950s, when the economy started to diversify.

Bananas are grown mainly along the north coast. Most of the Standard Fruit Company's plantations are within a seventy-five mile radius of La Ceiba; the United Fruit Company has its plantations in a triangle bounded by Puerto Cortés, Tela, and La Lima. Standard Fruit developed a variety called the Giant Cavendish, resistant to Panama disease, which had hurt the banana industry until 1960 when the Giant Cavendish began to be produced and exported. This variety, however, bruises easily and has to be shipped in paper cartons. This requirement, in turn, has created a paper carton industry in the banana area.

The United Fruit Company, starting in 1961, experimented with a different disease-resistant variety, called the Valery. The Valery is a stronger plant and more resistant to transit damage. United Fruit has an Associated Producers Program, whereby hundreds of independent growers rent or purchase land from the company, which in turn lends technical assistance to the independent growers and contracts to purchase their crop. The yield of the plantations of the independent growers is not as high per acre as is the yield on United Fruit and Standard Fruit plantations. Most of the increased banana production in the latter part of the 1960s was from independent producers who were continuing to enter the industry. A total high of 1.25 million metric tons was produced in 1968, but Hurricane Francelia caused production to drop to about 1 million metric tons in 1969; it was estimated in 1970 that the 1968 level of production would not be reached again for two or three years.

Coffee

Coffee is grown on over 40,000 small- and medium-sized farms. The heaviest concentration is in the department of Santa Bárbara, where over 20 percent of the coffee is produced. The general quality is not as high as the coffee of other Central American countries, mainly because of less modern processing techniques. Honduras is one of the smallest coffee producers in Central America, but coffee is the nation's second most important export. About half of all exports are handled by one company, which is the largest processor in the country, located in San Pedro Sula. Much of the farmer's production costs are financed by the exporters, who charge a high rate of interest.

Production of coffee runs in cycles, and the yield per acre varies considerably throughout the country. For example, the average annual yield for the 1960–65 period was 379,000 bags of 60 kilograms (2.2 pounds equal 1 kilogram), whereas the 1969/70 harvest was over 500,000 bags from about the same number of trees. Domestic consumption is between 90,000 and 100,000 bags annually, leaving the balance for export.

Because of the large number of families that are dependent upon coffee growing, the coffee office of the National Development Bank has been attempting to improve the quality and yield by providing technical assistance and new trees to the small farmer. More persons are involved in the coffee industry than in the banana industry. Some farmers plant coffee trees among banana plants in order to utilize the larger banana plant as a sunshade.

Corn

Corn is a staple food and is cultivated throughout the country on over 148,000 farms from sea level to high elevations. About half of all cultivated land is planted in corn; in 1969 corn covered over 1 million acres. The effects of weather are reflected in widely varying annual crop yields. For example, in both 1966 and 1967 heavy rains caused a lower yield than in previous years, whereas good weather in 1968 permitted a record crop of over 390,000 metric tons. Rain damage in 1969 again caused a low yield. Output per acre is low compared to other corn-growing areas of Central America.

Government assistance in the form of improved seeds, fertilizers, and technical advice reaches only a small percentage of the farmers. In years when there is surplus production, corn is exported to other Central American countries. Before the 1969 war with El Salvador most of the exports went to that country.

Sugar

Sugarcane is grown mostly in the central area of the country—in western Olancho and the northern part of Francisco Morazán—but also in Copán, Santa Bárbara, Comayagua, and Yoro. The largest single producer, however, is the Honduran Sugar Company (Compañía Azucareña Hondureña, S.A.), which has extensive irrigated canefields in the north near San Pedro Sula. Partly as a result of this company's efforts, Honduras became self-sufficient in sugar in 1962 and a sugar-exporting country in 1967 despite a rapid increase in domestic consumption. It is a signatory to the International Sugar Agreement and has both a small international export quota and a share of the United States sugar import quota. Commercial sugar production for the 1969/70 crop year was estimated at a 60,000 to 65,000 short tons, somewhat higher than for previous years. Most small-scale farmers also grow some sugarcane to make *panela* (brown sugar) for home use. There are no reliable statistics on this production, but it is estimated to be over 19,000 short tons annually.

Beans

Beans are one of the basic food crops and provide the staple protein in the diet. About 40 percent of the bean crop is grown by small farmers on plots of less than nine acres, and modern technology cannot be applied in such areas. Corn farmers frequently grow beans in the same fields after the corn harvest. The yield per acre remains about constant, and any increase in production is usually because of new areas brought under cultivation. The 1969/70 crop was about 53,000 metric tons, down slightly from previous years. Any excess production is exported, and El Salvador historically has been the largest market.

Cotton

Cotton is a relatively recent product, first grown in 1950. It is raised almost entirely in Choluteca, Valle, and Olancho departments. The costs of growing cotton are high, and the farms are large and mechanized, resulting in a slowly increasing yield per acre. At one time over 90 percent of production was exported, but by 1970 the product was no longer a major foreign exchange earner because of a number of factors: bad weather, insect damage, low world prices, and, beginning in 1969, a lack of fieldworkers on the farms located near the El Salvador border. At its height, cotton production provided employment to about 20,000 farmworkers; but many workers, including those from El Salvador, fled. The area planted in cotton has been dropping steadily. During the 1963—67 period an average of 31,000 acres were planted producing an average of 42,000 bales annually, but by 1969 only 16,000 acres were planted by farmers because of accumulated large unsold stocks. The 1969 production was about 20,000 bales, and domestic consumption was about 8,000 bales.

Tobacco

Tobacco is a regional specialty; 65 percent of the production comes from 2,400 farmers in the department of Copán in the extreme west, where it was first grown by Indians in precolonial times. Most of the balance is raised in neighboring Santa Bárbara and Ocotepeque departments. Since 1961 there has been some production in the eastern part of the country where the soil and climate are favorable to Havana-type cigar tobacco. Most of the tobacco grown in the country is cigar leaf, but some higher quality cigarette tobacco is also grown. About 4,000 farmers are engaged in tobacco growing, and they are assisted with cash advances, technical services, and fertilizer by the Honduran Tobacco Company (Tabacalera Hondureña, S.A.), the largest tobacco company in the country, and by the National Development Bank.

Other crops

Rice is cultivated mostly in the departments on the Atlantic coast. There are no large plantings. About 15,000 farms grow rice on a total of about 45,000 acres. Because of good soil and ideal climate conditions, the yield per acre is considered to be more than adequate, about 140 pounds per acre. The use of improved seed could increase the yield considerably. Production in the 1968/69 crop year was about 24,000 metric tons.

Sorghum is raised both as an animal food and for consumption by humans on 44,000 farms. Like beans, it is grown on small plots of marginal productivity mostly in southern Honduras, but total production frequently is higher than that of beans. In the 1969/70 crop year about 69,000 metric tons of sorghum were produced. Small quantities of soft wheat, about 1,000 metric tons, are produced in areas from 5,000- to 6,000-foot elevation, but large annual imports are required as consumption increases by 7 percent per year. Potatoes, other tubers, fruits, and vegetables are grown. About 12,000 acres of manioc are planted annually. The Standard Fruit Company has about 500 acres in citrus trees—oranges, grapefruit, and lemons. The same company also has commercial stands of coconuts. The best coconuts are shipped fresh, and the balance is dried into copra. The United Fruit Company has over 8,000 acres of African Palm trees. The palm oil is used domestically in margarine and soaps, with the residue being ground into cattlefeed.

Livestock

The number of cattle in 1970 was estimated at 1.5 million to 1.8 million head; most was beef cattle, but there were a few commercial herds of dairy cattle. Beef cattle are raised everywhere, but the largest herds are in Choluteca and Francisco Morazán departments.

The best quality cattle, however, is found in Cortés Department, where the pasturage is better and improved breeding is practiced. Other large concentrations are found in the departments of Yoro, Olancho, and El Paraíso. About 80 percent of the cattle is raised by small farmers whose herds average less than 50 head.

Domestic beef cattle are of two types called *chino* and *barroso*. They have little hair on their hides and can withstand drought and travel long distances. The mortality rate of domestic cattle is high; about 30 percent die before they are one year old, mostly of diseases. Those that survive are small and lose additional weight during dry seasons. Some of the grass on the north coast has high calcium and low phosphorus content, which causes brittle, easily fracturable bones. A common forage is jaragua grass.

For many years there was little or no incentive to improve the quality of the cattle because it was customary to sell beef cattle by head rather than weight. Therefore, a profit could be earned with no investment in controlled breeding, despite the high death rate. Since export sales of beef began to be based upon carcass weight, some improvement has occurred. From 1958 through 1968 about 2,500 head of pureblood breeding stock, predominantly Brahman, were imported by the government and major breeders.

One of the largest livestock producers is Standard Fruit, which has numerous ranches located between the towns of Papaloteca and San Juan del Norte. United Fruit also has cattle ranches, and the two companies continually improve the quality of their herds. A government program, to cost over L10 million, began in 1970 to improve the herds of designated cattle producers operating 135 ranches.

In 1970 there were an estimated 550,000 hogs, the largest number in Central America. Most were raised by farmers in the western part of the country as a secondary source of income. Pork production averaged about 4,000 metric tons annually. There were over 185,000 horses, used both for work on the farms and for transportation. Some oxen were also used for farmwork. Mules numbered under 80,000 and donkeys about 25,000. Goats and sheep are scarce, each group numbering fewer than 26,000. Poultry farmers have never been able to supply domestic needs, although there were over 2 million fowl in the country. Until the 1969 war with El Salvador imports from that country consisted of about 125,000 eggs daily and 30,000 hens weekly. A minor export is honey. Beekeepers have received financial and technical help from the National Development Bank.

Fishing and Forestry

Most fishermen use primitive methods, with manual-powered boats or sailboats. The lack of refrigeration facilities also hinders the growth of fishing. There is only small-scale fishing on the Pacific coast in the Gulf of Fonseca. Few boats venture out of the gulf into the Pacific Ocean. One fishing cooperative at San Lorenzo ships small amounts of fish and shrimp to Tegucigalpa. The Caribbean coast has more varieties of fish, and more fishing is done there than on the Pacific coast. The richest fishing grounds lie near the Bay Islands. Six companies, three on the mainland and three on the Bay Islands, constitute the commercial fishing industry. Shrimping is also done on the Caribbean coast, between Patuca and the Nicaraguan border. One of the companies has installed a cannery on Isla de Guanaja, one of the Bay Islands, and uses large, modern shrimp boats. Almost all of the shrimp production is exported rather than used domestically. A common freshwater fish caught in the rivers is the *quapot*. Small-scale freshwater bass fishing is done in Lake Yojoa. The government, with the help from the United Nations, started a program in 1968 to explore the extent of marine resources off the north coast.

The forestry industry is growing rapidly, and forest products are contributing an increasing percentage of foreign exchange earnings. The most valuable wood is pine. Broadleaved tropical hardwoods, particularly mahogany, are more plentiful than pine but are not as adequately exploited.

There is much waste and destruction of forest resources. An epidemic of the Southern pine beetle from 1963 to 1965 killed an estimated 20 percent of the high-quality pine trees. Over 6 million acres were affected, and the export value of the lost timber was the equivalent of US$300 million. Furthermore, every year an additional US$5 million worth of timber is lost by forest fires, most of which are deliberately set by farmers to clear land.

The number of sawmills has proliferated, and many of them do not use economical methods. About 20 percent of the cut timber is wasted because of inadequate lumbering methods. Transportation inadequacies increase the cost. Transportation accounts for 54 percent of the cost of logs delivered to sawmills.

One of the largest development projects in the country is a US$92-million wood-processing and paper venture of a company formed by foreign, domestic, and government interests. This complex was planned to begin operations in the mid-1970s and would give employment to thousands of persons.

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

Before World War II almost all manufacturing establishments had fewer than five employees. The only large industries were breweries;

those producing tobacco, leather, and shoes; and a few food plants. Since 1940 the growth rate for manufacturing has been relatively rapid as compared to other sectors of the economy. Many new enterprises have been created as a result of the larger market made available by the Central American Common Market. Honduran industry is, however, the least developed.

A detailed industrial census conducted by the government in 1967 divided all industrial establishments into two classifications: those with five or more employees, termed factories, and artisan shops. Artisan shops, or handicrafts, had fewer than five but at least one salaried employee and produced continually for at least six months annually. Under these definitions in 1967 there were 634 factories and 1,400 artisan shops. The number of factories had been higher in 1959, but the effects of competition from the Central American Common Market caused many inefficient small firms to close or merge. By 1962 there were only about 500 factories in the country, but the number started to rise again as modern, more efficient plants began to be erected.

Among factories, sawmills constitute the largest single grouping, with 18 percent of the total. Sawmills are proliferating as exploitation of the forest resources increases. The next largest grouping, with slightly more than 8 percent, was small plants making clothing. Bakeries followed, with about 8 percent.

Of the artisan shops, over 300 small shoemaking businesses constituted the largest grouping, with 22 percent of the total. Tailors and dressmakers were the second largest, with over 18 percent, followed by furniture shops (12 percent), brick and tile makers (9 percent), and vehicle repair shops (9 percent).

Over 70 percent of all factories are family owned. The balance are some form of corporate structure. Industry is concentrated in a few places. Over 90 percent of all industrial establishments are located in three departments—Atlántida, Cortés, and Francisco Morazán. About 75 percent, however, are concentrated around San Pedro Sula, making it the industrial center of the country. The plants located around Tegucigalpa are very light industry, such as textiles.

The food industry, particularly sugar refining, constitutes the most important segment of manufacturing by value of production. The value of food products is almost double the second largest section, lumber. Next in importance is beverage manufacture, three-fourths of which is beer brewing. This is followed by chemicals, clothing, and cement.

The country has a well-developed vegetable oil and margarine industry. Palm, coconut, and cottonseed oils are the raw materials needed for the manufacture of these products, and the same raw materials are also used in the well-developed soap industry. The most modern vegetable oil plant in Central America is located at La

Ceiba, and the largest plant in the world for making canned and frozen banana puree and banana chips is located near San Pedro Sula. This plant has a capacity for processing 20 million pounds of bananas annually. One of the largest breweries in Latin America is the Honduran Beer Company (Cervecería Hondureña, S.A.), which also bottles soft drinks.

About 15 percent of lumber production is very high quality boards for making furniture, some of which are exported. The construction industry creates a heavy demand for cement, wood, and other construction materials. Private construction is greater than public construction, but the value of public construction is growing at a faster rate. Housing, both private and public, is the largest element of the construction industry and is growing at the rate of 15 percent annually. There is one cement plant in the country, and in 1968 it doubled its capacity so that it can produce 300 metric tons of cement daily. This same plant also makes asbestos cement roofing, pipes, and tanks.

An oil refinery began operations at Puerto Cortés in 1968 that is capable of supplying about 75 percent of domestic petroleum needs. The balance used to be imported from El Salvador but, because the 1969 war disrupted this trade, the refinery may be enlarged. Adjacent to the refinery is a water desalinization plant capable of producing 190 million gallons of fresh water daily. Near San Pedro Sula is one of the largest plastic plants in Latin America with a monthly capacity of 650,000 pounds of polyethylene.

Three major industrial projects were being planned as of mid-1970 that would greatly stimulate the economy. One was the pulp and paper complex to be built on the north coast to utilize the forest resources of Olancho Department. The second was the construction of a barbed wire plant near San Lorenzo. The country is the largest importer of barbed wire in Central America because of the large cattle industry. Production in excess of domestic needs would be exported to the other members of the Central American Common Market. The third endeavor was a steel plant to be built at Agalteca, about twenty miles north of Tegucigalpa. Large iron ore deposits exist there, which more or less continually from 1568 to 1863 were mined by various owners and locally smelted into crude iron by use of charcoal. A new company formed by a Mexican steel company, the Honduran government, and other partners intend to exploit these deposits to manufacture steel bars. It was hoped that the steel plant would commence operations in 1972 with an annual capacity of 100,000 metric tons.

Mining

All underground mineral deposits belong to the state, but individuals may be granted the right to explore, excavate, and work any mines as if they were the owners. Precious stones and metals found on the surface belong to the occupant of the land. Mineral-bearing sands and river deposits may be freely worked by anyone if located on idle land. A new mining code passed in 1968 contained some provisions that, if implemented, would force marginal mines out of operations. As of 1970 there were indications that these regulations might be amended.

About 65 percent of the value of mining is represented by minerals, and 35 percent by nonminerals. The nonminerals are mostly building materials, such as stone, sand, and limestone. The major minerals being worked are zinc, lead, silver, gold, cadmium, and antimony. Deposits of other metals, including iron ore, were not being worked as of 1970. The United Nations helped establish the Department of Mineral Resources to undertake mineral surveys in a 4,000-square-mile area of northwest Honduras at a cost of about US$1 million.

The mining industry is small, but it is an important part of the economy because most of the metals are exported. Production and value of all minerals have been increasing steadily, and value was about L14 million in 1969. About 1,500 persons were employed in the industry as of 1970. Further, pan washing for gold in small streams is practiced by thousands of rural persons on a part-time basis. The country is in tenth place as a world silver producer. About 10,000 to 12,000 metric tons of both lead and zinc are mined annually. A famous old mine, the Rosario, which had ceased operations in 1954, was reopened, and in 1970 it was being worked by a joint venture of two mining companies to exploit copper, silver, lead, zinc, and gold.

As with underground minerals, the state also owns all petroleum deposits but may grant concessions for exploration, exploitation, transportation, and refining of petroleum and its products. Several companies have explored for oil since the late 1950s, but only traces were found in the western province of Santa Bárbara. More recently, drillings have occurred offshore on the Caribbean coast, but as of 1970 no commercial quantities had been discovered.

Energy

There were no fossil fuels in the country as of 1970, and the lack of sufficient energy has been one of the major obstacles to faster industrial growth. There has been, however, a continual increase of installed electrical generating capacity. Rates are high and service is frequently unreliable, but demand continues to grow at about 30 percent annually. More than 63 percent of the electricity produced is used by industry. Only about 15 percent of the homes in the country use electricity for home lighting, and less than 1 percent use it or gas for cooking or as a fuel. Over 90 percent of all homes use charcoal or wood as a cooking fuel, and 4 percent use kerosine. For home lighting over 45 percent use kerosine lamps, and about 37 percent use pine torches.

Per capita electric power production is about half the average for Central America as a whole. All current is 60 cycles alternating current, 100—220 voltage but is not stable. About ninety plants exist for public service, forty-three of which are under the control of the National Electric Energy Company (Empresa Nacional de Energía Eléctrica—ENEE). This autonomous government entity, administered by a five-member directorate, was created in 1957 from a previously existing local electric company (that had been a dependency of the then Ministry of Development, Agriculture, and Labor) operating only in Tegucigalpa and providing a limited service only to residents. The plants belonging to ENEE generate about two-thirds of the country's total electric power. A number of municipalities have their own electric company, the largest being that of La Paz. The Tela Railroad Company has a plant that supplies electricity to La Lima, Tela, and Puerto Cortés. The Standard Fruit Company provides energy to the city of La Ceiba and neighboring industries.

Slightly more than half of all installed capacity in 1970 was hydroelectric, the balance being thermal plants. The hydroelectric potential of the country was not being adequately exploited. Total known hydroelectric capacity was over 1 million kilowatts. A number of hydroelectric projects were under construction in 1970, the largest being amplification of the complex at Rio Lindo north of Lake Yojoa. The second stage of this development will add over 40,000 kilowatts to ENEE's capacity and was scheduled for completion at the end of 1971. This project already had a capacity of 30,000 kilowatts. Total potential of the site is 160,000 kilowatts.

LABOR

All persons over ten years of age, or about 1.2 million, were included in the labor force, but only 40 percent of those over ten actually were economically active. Of the economically active, about 60 percent were engaged in agriculture, nearly 12 percent in services, 8 percent in manufacturing, and about 4.5 percent in commerce; the balance was in mining, construction, public utilities, transportation, and communications. The percentage of the economically active persons in agriculture has been steadily declining since 1950, when it accounted for over 80 percent. Nevertheless, the percentage in agriculture in 1970 was the second highest in Latin America.

About 40 percent of the economically active are wage earners, 38 percent are self-employed, and 16 percent are unpaid family workers, predominantly in agriculture but also in commerce; the balance are either employers or nonclassified. The country has the largest percentage of self-employed persons in Central America.

No unemployment data are collected on a regular basis. The 1961 census indicated a 6-percent unemployment figure for that year, and a government estimate for 1967 was 7.5 percent. During the coffee, sugar, and cotton harvest seasons, unemployment drops as extra workers are needed. During the coffee season as many as 150,000 are required for the harvest. Many subsistence farmers leave their small plots during the harvest season to work a few weeks or months for wages.

By occupation most persons—almost 66 percent—are listed as farmworkers, fishermen, hunters, or loggers. Over 10 percent are craftsmen or production workers. Almost 8 percent are service workers, secretaries, or athletes. Four percent are salespersons, less than 3 percent are professional or technical workers, and the balance are administrative or managerial workers. Of the production workers and craftsmen, only about 30 percent actually work in factories. The majority of them work in small shops.

Until 1967 there was no minimum wage law. The highest wages and salaries are paid by the banana companies and by the sugar industry. The average monthly earnings of all workers on banana plantations are the equivalent of about US$85, whereas semiskilled and skilled workers near Tegucigalpa earn from US$50 to US$180 per month. An agricultural day laborer receives about US$1.25 daily. Government employees receive less salary than comparable workers in private industry and no benefits of the Labor Code. About 10,000 persons are employed by the central government.

The Labor Code of 1970 was an incorporation of all previous legislation dealing with labor matters. The most important of the previous measures was the Fundamental Charter of Labor Guarantees of 1955, a basic and comprehensive law of 875 separate articles covering such things as minimum wages, maximum hours, collective bargaining, and social security. The Labor Code is considered progressive and favorable to the labor movement, but it is not generally understood or followed by the majority of workers and employers.

The emphasis in the code is placed on protecting the rights of workers by legal means rather than by collective bargaining. Only about thirty collective labor contracts were in effect in 1970. Most aspects of labor relations are specifically spelled out in the code. The basic workweek for a weekly salary is forty-eight hours, but persons who receive only a daily salary may not work more than forty-four hours except in agriculture. Overtime pay ranges from 25 to 75 percent of base pay. There are eleven paid holidays during the year. A person who works on a holiday receives double pay. After one year's service, an employee is entitled to ten days of paid vacation, which increases to twenty days after four years' service. Severance pay for discharged employees is paid at the rate of 10 days' salary for three to six months' employment, twenty days' salary for employment of six months to one year, and one month's salary for each year, with an eight-months' salary maximum.

Agricultural, livestock, and forestry enterprises having more than ten employees must provide housing and medical facilities. If the employees have a collective total of more than seventy children, school facilities must also be provided by the employer.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security is responsible for labor matters. It has five operating bureaus. The Office of Director General of Labor registers unions and employer organizations, handles labor contracts, and maintains statistics on labor unions. The Office of the Inspector General of Labor inspects compliance with the Labor Code. The Office of Director General of Social Security coordinates all activities of government agencies and institutions that are involved in welfare programs. The Office of Labor Solicitor represents individual workers or labor unions on legal matters. The National Institute of Investigations and Social Studies carries out studies on the cost of living, salaries, welfare, and related subjects.

The Labor Code provides for mediation and conciliation or arbitration when there is a dispute before a strike can be declared. The procedures have been successful in holding the number of strikes to a minimum, as most disputes are resolved to the satisfaction of both parties. For example, during the period from 1959 through 1964, there were over 2,000 disputes annually but only one legal strike. From 80 to 90 percent of all disputes are settled by the intervention of a labor solicitor from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. If he cannot achieve a settlement, then the case goes to one of the labor courts. Almost 60 percent of all cases going to court deal with discharges of employees. Labor judges are nominated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security but appointed by the Supreme Court of Justice. Their decisions may be appealed up to the Supreme Court.

The organized labor union movement is the youngest in Latin America, dating only from the 1950s. The oldest active union in the country was formed in March 1955. Previous attempts by labor leaders to organize workers were unsuccessful. Despite its youth and its small size, the labor movement is recognized as being well organized and generally acts in a responsible manner. Estimates of total union membership in 1970, including agricultural, service, and industrial unions, ranged up to almost 29,000 workers belonging to about eighty unions. About half the number of organized workers are located in the Department of Cortés, where union activity first developed. A union must have at least 30 members to be recognized. Most are small, only three unions having a membership of

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over 1,000. Although a few of the unions are independent, most of them belong to one of four national labor federations.

The largest of these federations is the Federation of Workers of the North of Honduras (Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Norteños de Honduras—FESITRANH), formed in 1957 and composed of twenty-five unions with a total membership of over 14,000. Two of its component unions, the Tela Railroad Union (Sindicato de la Tela Railroad Company—SITRATERCO) and the Standard Fruit Company Workers Unified Union (Sindicato Unificado de Trabajadores de la Standard Fruit Company), account for about 70 percent of the federation's total membership.

The Federation of Free Unions of Honduras (Federación Central de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Libres de Honduras—FECESITLIH) was formed in 1959 by regional unions in and near Tegucigalpa. Over thirty small unions, with total membership of over 3,000, belonged to the federation as of 1970. The National Federation of Workers and Peasants of Honduras (Federación Nacional de Trabajadores y Campesinos de Honduras—FENACH) was formed in 1962 when numerous small local farm labor committees joined together for a better bargaining position on the larger farms and plantations. It has a little less than 6,000 members.

These three national federations in turn form the Confederation of Honduran Workers (Confederacion de Trabajadores de Honduras—CTH), which was begun in 1964. Outside this confederation is the Authentic Federation of Honduran Unions (Federación Autentica Sindical Hondureña—FASH), started in 1963. FASH is affiliated with the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions, a European-based international labor movement, and had about 2,000 members.

It is difficult to train skilled workers because 90 percent of the labor force has not finished primary school. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security organizes workers' seminars and short courses and has a small apprenticeship program, which tries to upgrade workers skills. A larger program is financed jointly by the Ministry of Economy and private enterprise.

Honduran labor leaders benefit from the location in the country of the Institute of Central American Trade Union Studies, a regional organization engaged in labor training. The institute opened in 1964 and provides for Central American labor leaders three-month courses in labor codes, social legislation, labor education, collective bargaining, housing, and cooperatives. The country is a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO). It originally was a member from 1919 to 1938 but left the organization in the latter year. It rejoined in 1955 but has not been an active member. It has ratified less than 10 percent of the international agreements sponsored by the ILO on labor matters.

FINANCE

Banking and Financial Matters

Banks

The banking system is headed by the autonomous Central Bank of Honduras (Banco Central de Honduras), which began operations in 1950. Until its creation there was no coordination of fiscal and monetary policy. It has extensive powers over the monetary and credit system. It can lend advances to commercial banks and to the government. Among its other important powers, it acts as the fiscal agent of the government, issues currency, sets interest rates and requirements against deposits, and controls gold and foreign exchange. Reserve requirements as of mid-1970 ranged from 20 to 25 percent depending upon type of currency deposited. The bank is headed by a president who is appointed for a seven-year term, which may be extended. The President is assisted by a bank manager who handles all the administrative operations of the bank.

At the same time the Central Bank of Honduras commenced operations another autonomous state-owned bank opened. This is the National Development Bank, which, although engaging in general banking activities, is designed to encourage economic development in agriculture and industry. It has twenty branches and over 800 employees. Its Board of Directors consists of the bank president, the minister of economy, the minister of communications and public works, the president of the Central Bank, one representative, collectively, for the commercial banks, and five representatives of private enterprise.

The emphasis of the bank's activities is on agriculture. Annually, it provides between 60 and 65 percent of the total banking agricultural credit in the country. Most of its loans are short term and are made to small- and medium-sized agricultural livestock producers, who usually cannot obtain credit from a commercial bank.

The National Development Bank has an industrial development division, which helps develop small industries. One project of this division was the building of a fifty-acre industrial park near Tegucigalpa in 1970 to accommodate about sixty small plants. The bank also engages in nonbanking activities. It operates numerous agricultural supply stores that sell supplies and equipment to farmers, maintains a price support program for several commodities, owns seventeen warehouses and storage facilities around the country, and runs a milk plant and a cotton gin. The National Development Bank seldom operates at a profit because many of its accounts are overdue or extended; during the 1965–68 period it lost between L370,000 and L1 million annually. In 1968 it set up a special reserve fund to help cover future loan losses.

The dominant commercial bank is the Atlantide Bank (Banco Atlántida), founded in 1913 in La Ceiba. By 1970 it had nine domestic branches, five agencies, a mobile rural unit, and foreign branches in Nicaragua and Guatemala. Its total resources were over L60 million, and it held about 45 percent of total commercial bank deposits. In 1967 the Chase Manhattan Bank bought a controlling share of the bank. The oldest and second largest bank in the country is the Bank of Honduras (Banco de Honduras), which has six branches. In 1965 it became affiliated with the First National City Bank by selling it a major share of its stock.

The Honduran Savings Bank (Banco de El Ahorro Hondureño) is the third largest commercial bank and the largest bank controlled entirely by domestic capital. The next largest bank is the Bank of London and Montreal, which has two branches in San Pedro Sula and one each in Tegucigalpa and La Ceiba. Other commercial banks in descending order of total resources are: the Bank of America, which began operating in 1966 in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula; Honduran Capitalizing Bank (Banco de la Capitalizadora Hondureña, known as BANCAHSA), which was started by Salvadoreans in 1948 as a savings bank and operated as one until 1968, when it became a commercial bank; Workers Bank (Banco de los Trabajadores), a mixed state-private bank that began operating in 1967 to meet the credit needs of workers, peasants, and small businessmen; Bank of Commerce (Banco de Comercio), founded in 1952 and formerly a savings bank called the Bank of Property, which changed its name and initiated commercial operations in 1968; and Western Bank (Banco de Occidenté), a small regional bank located in Copán.

There are numerous other financial institutions that provide credit for specified purposes. One such institution is the Autonomous Municipal Bank (Banco Municipal Autónomo), a state bank created in 1961 and owned jointly by all the municipalities in the country. It provides funds for municipal-financed projects, but its resources are small and it is not a large institution. It has only seventy-five employees, and its resources consist both of deposits made by the municipalities and the public and bond issues.

A number of savings and loan associations exist, and many of the commercial banks, plus the Housing Institute (Instituto de la Vivienda), have savings and loan departments for home construction. Liberal new regulations passed in 1968 have encouraged the growth of local savings and loan associations. The private Mortgage Bank (Banco Hipotecario) was formed in 1969 by a group of businessmen in San Pedro Sula to finance the development of middle class home construction. Shares in the Mortgage Bank were sold to the public to raise capital. Another private institution formed in San Pedro Sula is the Honduran Financial Company (Financiera Hondureña, S.A.), which began operating in 1964. It provides investment banking services for new industrial projects. It also underwrites the marketing of securities of the few corporations trying to raise capital. One domestic insurance company exists plus sixteen foreign firms.

Credit

The banking system has sufficient resources for most credit purposes of eligible private borrowers, but many persons, particularly small farmers, are not eligible. At the end of 1969 there were almost L290 million in outstanding loans in the banking system. Total capital was L110 million, and total assets were over L417 million. In order to achieve a better balance of the available credit, the Central Bank of Honduras announced in 1968 that loans for the financing of imports could not exceed 30 percent of total bank credit with repayment in one year. This was further cut to 20 percent in 1970. As the result of this and other policies the composition of outstanding bank loans was altered. Bank credit for industrial purposes surpassed those for all other purposes beginning in 1968. Agricultural credits were in second place, loans for coffee growing and stock raising predominating. Home mortgages moved into third place, and commercial credit dropped to fourth. For many years commercial loans had been the single most important type of credit. Small amounts of credit are available for mining, services, transportation, and consumers. In 1968 consumer credit was about 7 percent of the total.

Most of the agricultural credit is granted by the government-owned National Development Bank, and this type of credit represents about 80 percent of the bank's business. In 1969 over 12,000 farmers received credit from the National Development Bank. Agricultural credit represents only about 17 percent of the business of commercial banks. Until 1950 only two of the private banks offered agricultural credits. In addition to bank credit many loans are obtained by the small producer or individual outside the banking system. Merchants, wealthy individuals, and businesses frequently make loans to persons who cannot obtain bank credit. Interest rates on these loans are usually higher than bank rates. In 1970 Congress passed a law creating a national pawnshop where persons seeking small sums of money could receive it by pledging personal articles.

Currency

The unit of currency in 1970 was the lempira (L). It came in paper denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100. Fractions of lempiras are called centavos, and coins are of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 centavo denominations. More than 40 percent of all coins in circulation are of the 20 centavo denomination.

After independence, coins from Spain and other countries circulated as well as coins minted in Honduras between 1822 and 1858. The Honduran minted coins were of low silver content and soon drove the better foreign silver coins from circulation, but in 1873 silver coins from many countries reappeared because of a drop in the price of silver. In 1879 the monetary unit was declared to be the silver peso, and new coins were minted domestically that circulated together with the foreign coins. Most of these new domestic coins, however, contained gold mixed with the silver, and many were exported because the metal content was worth more than the face value of the coin. Because of this almost all the balance of the domestic coins disappeared from circulation during World War I, and the Atlantide Bank received permission from the government to introduce United States money to meet the scarcity. Finally, in 1918 United States money was made legal tender in Honduras at the rate of two pesos to one United States dollar.

The old silver peso coins returned in 1920 when the price of silver again fell. In 1926 the lempira (named after an Indian Chief who fought the Spaniards) was made the new official monetary unit at the rate of two lempiras to one United States dollar. No lempira coins were minted, however, until 1931, and large amounts of United States coins were imported until 1949, when sufficient lempira coins finally were circulating. Until 1950 the only domestic paper currency was banknotes issued by two commercial banks. In 1950 the Central Bank of Honduras took over the issuance of national paper lempira. United States banknotes ceased to be legal tender on January 1, 1954. At the end of 1969 there were over 72 million paper lempiras in circulation. In addition, demand deposits (checks) in commercial banks totaled over L67 million, and savings accounts totaled about L21 million. The total money supply has been increasing at an average annual rate of about 10 percent since 1961. One major reason for the rapid rise in the money supply is that many subsistence farmers have been entering the economy by selling rather than bartering their produce.

The lempira is one of the few currencies in the world with almost no restrictions on it. It is freely convertible into any other currency. It ranks with the United States dollar and three other currencies in having the longest lifespan (over thirty-six years in mid-1970) since its last devaluation. Residents can own and deal in gold, own foreign currencies, maintain bank balances abroad, and export and import national currency. Some limited exchange controls were imposed after the July 1969 war with El Salvador when foreign exchange holdings started to drop. From a record high of almost US$42 million in November 1969 the Central Bank's holdings dropped to US$26 million in May 1970. Most of the foreign exchange is in the form of United States dollars. The nation's official gold holdings at the end of 1969 was only US$110,000. No remittances were to be made to El Salvador, and no sales of foreign exchange were to be made either to citizens of El Salvador resident in Honduras or to Hondurans resident in El Salvador. These limited restrictions were expected to be temporary.

Securities

There is a very small securities market organized by the Central Bank that deals in bonds and other fixed-income securities issued by government institutions and the commercial banks. Seven types of securities are traded: treasury letters (short-term securities issued by the government to cover seasonal needs); public debt bonds (long-term bonds whose funds are used for public investments and which are sold to banks at a 4-percent interest rate and to individuals at 6 percent); National Development Bank bonds (issued periodically to increase the bank's capital); autonomous institution bonds (not frequently issued); local government bonds (issued by a few of the larger municipalities to finance public works); mortgage certificates (issued by three commercial banks); and mortgage bonds (issued by one home mortgage company). Securities of private companies are traded informally and infrequently through persons who act as brokers. In addition, some commercial banks hold shares of private firms that they may sell. The market for private companies' common stock is limited because dividends can be paid legally for only three years.

Foreign mutual funds are prohibited in the country, unless specifically authorized, because of fear of flight of capital. The maximum interest rate allowed for savings deposits was 8 percent as of 1969, and higher rates were available in other countries. In 1970 discussions began within the Central American Common Market to create a regional capital market. There would be a Central American stock exchange located in one of the capital cities and brokers operating in all the others.

Budget

The government traditionally has followed a policy of fiscal conservatism. Current expenditures seldom exceed ordinary revenue. In many years there is a surplus in the current account, and budgetary deficits are small when they do occur. Capital expenditures for infrastructure purposes like highways, however, are not covered by the surplus revenue from the current account, and the government has to obtain either domestic or foreign loans for such expenditures.

Budgets are prepared by the Directorate General of Budgets of the Secretariat of Economy and Finance. The fiscal year has been the calendar year since 1957. Budgets have been increasing annually. The 1967 budget was almost L170 million. This rose in 1968 to over L196 million, to almost L216 million in 1969, and to L225 million for 1970. The 1970 budget increase was one of the smallest in recent years, partly influenced by the economic effects of the 1969 war with El Salvador and Hurricane Francelia. In 1971 the budget rose steeply again, to L250 million.

Revenues

Taxes usually bring in over 80 percent of government revenue. In 1968 it was 83 percent. Loans account for between 10 and 15 percent, and miscellaneous revenues, particularly government-owned services like the telephone, telegraph, postal, warehousing, lighthouse fees, and fines, bring in the balance. The tax burden is not very great, although it has been increasing. In 1964 it amounted to 8.8 percent of GNP. By 1968 the tax burden was 10.4 percent of total revenues, about 80 percent accruing to the central government, 16 percent to local governments, and 4 percent to autonomous agencies. Central government revenues have been increasing at over 5 percent annually since 1961. They were L108 million in 1965, L122 million in 1966, L130 million in 1967, L138 million in 1968, and L153 million in 1969. Part of the increased revenue has come about as a result of improved administration and new taxes. Cortés and Francisco Morazán departments produce about 80 percent of total revenue, an indication of where the wealth of the country is concentrated.

Sales and Consumption Taxes. There are numerous sales and consumption taxes that collectively have been producing a steadily increasing yield so that by 1968 they became the most important source of government revenue, accounting for about 29 percent of total income. The various sales and consumption taxes apply to most commodities with certain exceptions, such as basic foods, drugs, and clothing. They also apply to services like hotel bills, restaurants, and places of amusements. Retail firms with monthly sales over L3,000 have to maintain records of sales and to collect taxes on sales and submit them to the government. Establishments with less than L3,000 sales monthly are exempt from recordkeeping. Instead, they pay a tax to the wholesalers from whom they obtain their merchandise and pass the tax on to their customers. The wholesalers in turn must maintain sales records and submit the tax. Each firm that maintains sales records is audited by the government every two years, and tax fraud is minimized.

One of the more important of the various sales consumption taxes is the 3-percent general sales tax. It went into effect in 1963, applies to most retail sales, and brings in between 7 and 8 percent of total income. In 1968 new general sales taxes became effective for certain nonessential consumer products. The new taxes were either 10 percent or 20 percent depending upon the article being taxed. There were public demonstrations against the new taxes, but they remained in effect.

Of the consumption taxes levied only on specific commodities, those on beer and liquors are the more important. The beer tax is paid by the producer or importer, and the rate is eighteen centavos per bottle. It has been in effect since 1927 and brings in about 6 to 7 percent of government income. The liquor tax varies according to the size of the bottle but is only paid on domestically produced liquor. Revenue produced by this tax is about 6 percent of government income. A cigarette sales tax, in effect since 1927, applies to domestic and imported cigarettes and produces between 3 and 4 percent of total revenue. Other specific consumption and sales taxes are a vehicle sales tax, ranging from 5 to 20 percent of value; a sugar tax, paid by producers and importers at the rate of L1.5 per 100 pounds; a match tax, in effect since 1932; a soft drink tax levied on all soft beverages at the rate of one centavo per six-ounce bottle; and a petroleum tax, which varies according to type of petroleum product. Revenue generated from these other taxes is low, and none produce more than 1 or 2 percent income.

Import Duties. For many years import duties were the single most important source of government revenue, but in 1968 they fell to second place. The yield did not grow in the late 1960s and in some years was less than the previous years despite an increase in total imports. By 1969 import duties accounted for about 21 percent of total revenue, whereas in 1961 they had accounted for almost 50 percent. The reason for this was the rapid growth in imports of duty-free items from the Central American Common Market and exemptions from duties for goods imported under the provisions of the industrial development law. In 1968, for example, almost 70 percent of imports were not subject to duties. There are no duties on over 98 percent of the products produced by members of the Central American Common Market. Ninety-eight percent of the Honduran customs duties are listed in the Central American Uniform Tariff Nomenclature. These are common duties levied by all members on imports from nonmember countries. The Honduran national tariff applies to the remaining 2 percent.

The rates are compound, that is, specific plus an ad valorem rate based on the cost, insurance, and freight at the port of entry. The rates range from a low 5 percent for capital equipment items needed for agriculture to 150 percent for luxury goods. Since 1969 a special additional 30-percent surcharge has been added to the duty on imports from nonmembers, and it is estimated that the surcharge will bring in at least 4 percent of government income in the future. Some very small minor taxes relating to imports also exist, but their total revenue yield is less than one-third of 1 percent. Also related to imports are consular taxes, which bring in between 6 and 7 percent of income. Since 1906 every import has to be accompanied by an invoice signed by a Honduran consul in the country of origin. In 1970 this consular tax was 8 percent of the invoice value.

Income Tax. The first income tax was passed in 1949 and modified in 1963. The yield has been steadily increasing and by 1968 accounted for 26 percent of government revenue. The rate structure is progressive, raising from 3 percent for the lowest income bracket to 40 percent for the highest. The income tax year usually is the calendar year, but businesses may request to pay on their fiscal basis. All individuals and businesses with gross income in excess of L2,000 annually must file a tax statement within three months of the end of their tax year. Less than 1 percent of the population is thus affected. Over 85 percent of the total income tax is paid by businesses. Income earned both in the country and abroad by residents is subject to the tax. Nonresidents pay only on their income earned in Honduras. Income from dividends, government bonds, and insurance policies are tax exempt. There are other exemptions and deductions to arrive at net taxable income. The highest rate applies to net income in excess of 1 million.

Export Duties. Export duties are levied on several products. Coffee is the major product involved. The export duty is L10 per bag. In an effort to help coffeegrowers because of low international prices, however, the government temporarily rescinded the duty for a five-year period starting in September 1969. Export duties also are levied on wood, bananas, and silver. Until the duty on coffee was rescinded, all combined export duties brought in 4 percent of government income.

Miscellaneous Taxes. A number of other taxes exist, all producing minor amounts of revenue. One of these is the stamp tax, the oldest national tax, first created in 1897. There have been over a dozen modifications of it since then. Stamped paper must be used for all official acts, and either stamp paper or tax stamps are required for all private documents such as contracts and invoices. An aircraft passenger tax has been levied on all airlines since 1949. It is based upon the value of passenger tickets sold. Public spectacles, except benefit performances are taxed at 10 percent of the ticket price. There is an annual vehicle-use tax, which varies according to the age of the vehicle. A small social security tax is paid by the employees of the judicial branch, the military, and the telegraph service. No one else pays a social security tax. An inheritance and gift tax has been in effect since 1938. The rates are progressive, ranging from 1 to 20 percent and varying according to the relationship of the beneficiary. A property transfer tax is levied on the transfer of all real estate and buildings. The rate is 2 percent of the sales price for urban property and 1.5 percent for rural property. Other very minor taxes are insurance policy taxes, sawmill operations tax, merchant marine registration tax, incorporation of new companies tax, and a telegram tax.

Expenditures

Slightly over 70 percent of total expenditures goes for current expenses, about 20 percent for capital expenditures, and the balance for the amortization of the public debt. There has been a slight shift in the relative percentages during the late 1960s. Current expenditures have fallen by 4 percent, while combined capital expenditures and debt amortization have risen by that percentage. The central government spends about 86 percent of the total annual current expenses, autonomous entities and local governments spending the balance. The current expenses of the central government have been rising at an annual rate of 8 percent since 1961 and have been equivalent to between 12 and 13 percent of GNP. Most of the current expenses are for salaries and wages of government employees.

The capital expenditures are for public investment, mostly public works, particularly highways. Capital expenditures had been increasing at an average rate of about 5 percent since 1961, except in 1967 when a major highway project caused a 30-percent jump in such expenditures. Much of the capital expenditures have been financed by surpluses of the capital account, external loans being raised for the difference.

Analyzing expenditures by functions, the costs of general government administration amount to 27 percent of the total. About 20 percent is spent on education and culture; 17 percent, on transportation and communications; 9 percent, on public health; almost 5 percent, on agriculture; and over 4 percent, on labor and social welfare. The balance is spent on housing, public debt, and miscellaneous. The amounts spent on education and public health have been increasing fastest.

Breaking the expenditures down by government institutions indicates that the Ministry of Communications and Public Works spends the most money, about 28 percent of the total; the Ministry of Public Education spends the second largest amount, over 18 percent; the Ministry of Defense and Public Security spends around 9 to 10 percent of the total; the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Economy each spends about 5 percent; and all other ministries plus the Congress and Judiciary spend lesser percentages.

Public Debt and Balance of Payments

The outstanding public debt as of March 31, 1970, was almost L291 million, the major portion of which was foreign debt. The public debt has been steadily rising since 1951. From 1933 until 1951 it had been slowly diminishing as the government paid off old debts. By 1951 it had fallen to less than L12 million, only L2.5 million being external. In 1951 the internal debt started to rise, and in 1955 so did the foreign debt as major public works programs began to be initiated.

Despite the rising debt, it is not a difficult burden for the country. The total debt is about 5 percent of GNP, a relatively small percentage. Amortization of it is equivalent to about 1 percent of GNP and only requires between 2 and 3 percent of export earnings to meet the interest charges. This rate is one of the lowest in all of Latin America.

The major portion of the domestic debt consists of bonds issued by the central government and the autonomous entities. The largest single debt is the 1969 National Defense Bond issue to help cover the costs of the war with El Salvador. The largest share of the domestic debt, 38 percent, is held by private persons who have purchased the bonds. Commercial banks hold almost 33 percent of the domestic debt, and the Central Bank, the autonomous agencies, and the National Development Bank hold the balance. The foreign debt is comprised almost entirely of loans, totaling in 1970, nearly fifty different ones contracted with international lending agencies, United States government agencies, and private foreign banks and firms. These loans have been negotiated by the central government or by one of the autonomous entities. The loans range from three to fifty years and carry varying rates of interest.

Throughout most of the 1960s the balance of payments was characterized by an annual deficit in the current account, which was more than covered by the capital account so that the reserves of foreign exchange actually increased. A large current account deficit could not be covered in 1967, and there was a one-fourth loss in international reserves. Capital inflow again covered current account losses in 1968, and reserves rose once more, but in 1969 and also apparently in 1970 a decrease in the international reserve position reoccurred (see table 5).

Capital inflow is usually high. It is about equally divided between private and official capital. Private capital is mostly investments going into the banana plantations and new industries. Official capital is mostly loans going to the government for long-term development projects.

The current account has been negative every year since 1962

Table 5. Honduras, Balance of Payments
(in millions of United States dollars)

	1968	1969[1]	1970[2]
Exports (f.o.b.)[3]	180.9	173.9	165.4
Imports (f.o.b.)[3]	170.8	174.3	186.5
Balance of trade[4]	10.1	- 0.4	- 21.1
Freight and insurance	- 15.1	- 15.5	- 16.4
Tourism	- 6.4	- 6.8	- 6.0
Foreign investment income	- 22.4	- 17.7	- 14.8
Interest	- 0.8	- 1.6	- 2.1
Government transactions	1.5	1.5	1.4
Other services	1.8	1.9	2.3
Transfers	6.3	6.6	6.1
Balance on current accounts	- 25.0	- 32.0	- 50.6
Balance on capital accounts	30.9	26.2	41.2
Errors and omissions	6.0	2.8	2.6
Change in services	+ 11.9	- 3.0	- 6.8

[1] Estimated.

[2] Forecast.

[3] Free on board.

[4] Trade figures do not agree with figures from foreign trade sources because of different accounting systems used by the government.

Source: Adapted from Economist Intelligence Unit, "Quarterly Economic Review: Central America," I, London, 1970.

despite the fact that exports frequently exceed imports. The cost of services, principally insurance and freight on imports and Hondurans traveling abroad, offset annually any favorable trade balance. The situation is worse in years when imports exceed exports. In addition, profit sent abroad by foreign companies is always high and is usually the largest single source of capital outflow. Transfers of capital are almost always favorable and consist of remittances by Hondurans working abroad and grants and donations by foreign governments and private institutions.

DOMESTIC TRADE AND TRANSPORTATION

Commerce and Marketing

There are over 2,000 commercial establishments in the country. The majority of them are small stores selling groceries and miscellaneous articles. The shops in the smaller villages and towns are family owned, and all employees are members of the family. A few supermarkets exist; the first one was started in San Pedro Sula in 1954. A number of larger department-type stores exist in the major cities. All commercial establishments are regulated by the commercial code of 1950. Foreigners require the authorization of the government to enter into business. Before the war with El Salvador in 1969, many small businesses were owned by Salvadoreans. Because of pressure and sanctions placed on them officially and unofficially, there was some disruption of business and domestic trade for several months.

The most important commercial center of the country is Tegucigalpa, which is also the distribution center for general merchandise for the southern part of the country. San Pedro Sula is second, and the stores there depend for much of their business on persons who reside in smaller towns nearby. The marketing and distribution of goods and products are handled in various ways but are generally characterized by numerous middlemen, a lack of sufficient warehousing and storage facilities, lack of uniformity of weights and measures, and inadequate transportation between producer and consumer.

There is neither a unified system for the marketing of agricultural products nor a method whereby producers or wholesalers can be quickly informed of local surpluses and shortages so that excess production in one area can be shipped to another. A cotton cooperative serves as the marketing agent for cotton farmers. Tobacco trade is in the hands of a few persons who travel to the farm to purchase the tobacco there. Beef for domestic use is not graded, and prices vary by as much as 20 percent between cities. Middlemen usually purchase the cattle directly at the ranch on an estimated weight basis, and the animals are driven to market overland, causing considerable weight loss. For export beef, cattle are shipped by truck or rail to the slaughterhouses. There is much illegal slaughter in the country because municipal slaughterhouses charge L8 per head as a slaughter fee. The illegal slaughter usually results in unsanitary conditions.

Farmers' markets exist in every city, town, and village and provide a way for the farmer to sell his produce directly to consumers, although many of the merchants in the markets are not farmers but rather middlemen. There are numerous street vendors in all major towns who sell food, such as fruits and vegetables, and miscellaneous articles like combs and pens. Some of the street vendors move about the streets, but most of them station themselves in the same place daily.

The National Development Bank is engaged in the marketing of coffee, corn, rice, beans, and dairy products. It also operates the best storage facilities for grains. The government also has customs warehouses in all seaports and at the Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula airports, where all imported merchandise can be stored. Other storage facilities are maintained by the large fruit companies, trucking firms, and largest retailers.

Newspaper advertising is directed to the medium and upper income groups. Few newspaper advertisements are larger than one-half page. Radio advertising reaches all income groups and consists of jingles and spot announcements. Television is growing as another mass advertising media, and one domestic advertising firm has become the first in Central America to successfully utilize animated cartoons for publicity. Slides with announcements are projected on the screen in motion picture houses during intermissions, and sound trucks are frequently heard on the streets.

Business hours are from 8 A.M. to noon and from 1:30 to 5 P.M. Some stores close on Saturday afternoons. The metric system of weights and measures has been the official one since 1912. Additionally some thirty local units of measure, mostly Indian and Spanish, are used by the populace, a practice that creates difficulties for persons unfamiliar with them. On and near the banana plantations United States weights and measures are used.

Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula each have joint chambers of commerce and industry. La Ceiba, Copán, Choluteco, and Tela each support a chamber of commerce. The National Manufacturers Association (Asociación Nacional de Industriales) is headquartered in Tegucigalpa.

The cost of living in Tegucigalpa is higher than the national average but in the rural areas is much lower. Retail price indexes are maintained on a regular basis for only three areas: in Tegucigalpa, in San Pedro Sula, and in what is termed the "minor urban areas combined" (Comayagua, Danlí, Trujillo, La Esperanza, Juticalpa, and Ocotepeque). Using 1963 as a base year, the general consumer price index in Tegucigalpa at the end of 1969 was 118 for all items counted, food items being only 110. The overall price level therefore increased by 3 percent annually, indicating only moderate inflationary pressures.

Communications

Domestic and foreign communications should improve after completion of a Central American telecommunications network, on which construction commenced in 1970. The network will be almost 800 miles long and extend from Guatemala to Costa Rica with interconnections to Panama and Mexico.

As of 1970 about 300 towns were connected by a domestic telegraph system operated by the Directorate General of Electric Communications. The service first began in 1878 and slowly was extended throughout most of the country with the exception of the departments of Gracias a Dios and the Bay Islands. Persons in these two departments can only communicate by radio. The telegraph equipment in use is old, maintenance is poor, and service is unreliable. Many of the stations use hand-operated Morse code keys from the original installations. These stations require frequent retransmission because of interruptions. About 40 percent of all messages are sent by the government or a government entity, all of which receive this service free of charge. International telegraph service is provided by a commercial company, All American Cables. A small teletype service exists between Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, and the government plans to extend service to other cities.

Most telephone service is provided by the government. Three cities—Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and La Ceiba—have automatic telephone systems. The capacity of the capital's system was about 10,400 lines; San Pedro Sula's was about 1,000 lines and La Ceiba's was about 200 lines. Forty-three cities have manually operated telephone service, the two largest being Puerto Cortés and Comayagua. Most domestic service is poor, with frequent interference, noise, and low voice level. Telephone rates range from L8 for residential service to L25 for commercial service. There are also several privately operated telephone systems. The Tela Railroad owns two systems, one in Tela and one in Lima Nueva, with a total of 1,300 installations. The Standard Fruit Company operates 50 lines from La Ceiba, and the New York and Rosario Mining Company has 100 lines in El Mochito.

Starting in 1964 the government granted licenses for private companies to operate radio-telephone service to augment the regular telephone system. About twenty-four cities are connected with Tegucigalpa by radio-telephone. One private company, Tropical Radio and Telegraph Company, connects about four cities and has service to the rest of Central America, Mexico and the United States. There are almost 450 post offices in the country; 20 of them are classified as first class.

Transportation

Roads

The national road system is the smallest in Central America. The government recognizes that highways and roads are essential to a systematic development of the economy and is trying to accomplish two goals: improving the existing roads between areas of production and points of consumption or exportation and opening up isolated farming areas with feeder roads. Government services reach only those rural families living near roads. To achieve these goals, numerous foreign loans have been contracted for the various road-building projects.

In 1965 there was less than 1,000 miles of roads in the country with only 24 miles paved. By 1970 over 2,500 miles existed with over 250 miles paved and 800 more miles considered first-class roads. Major new construction as of 1970 included the Northern

Highway from Tegucigalpa to San Pedro Sula, the Western Highway from San Pedro Sula through Copán to the El Salvador border at El Poy, and connecting roads to both the Guatemalan and Nicaraguan borders. The Northern Highway is considered the country's most vital highway.

There were about 22,000 registered motor vehicles in the country at the end of 1968, of which almost 9,000 were commercial vehicles and over 2,000 buses. The size and capacity of the buses and trucks have been steadily increasing as roads are improved, all of which help to cut transportation costs. The bus companies have almost immediately extended their lines to serve newly opened rural areas.

Railroads

There are three railroads in the country with a total of about 650 miles of track. They all operate in the north and along the coastal cities, and the capital, Tegucigalpa, is not on any rail line. None of the lines extends more than 65 miles inland. The Standard Fruit Company's Railway is the largest, with 300 miles of track, 1,000 freight cars, and 31 passenger cars. The Standard Fruit Company's Railway services the towns near its plantations and runs to the port of La Ceiba. It is the largest passenger carrier in the country.

The Tela Railroad—with 236 miles of track, 1,700 freight cars, and 32 passenger cars—belongs to the United Fruit Company. It services the port of Tela and nearby towns and connects with the Standard Fruit Company's Railway, although cargo has to be transferred because of a difference in track gauge. The third railroad is the National Railroad of Honduras (F.C. Nacional de Honduras) a government-owned, autonomous entity under the Ministry of Communications and Public Works. It has 112 miles of track in the San Pedro Sula Valley, 400 freight cars, and 17 passenger cars. It operates a profitable service between Puerto Cortés, San Pedro Sula, and other inland towns in the valley. The National Railroad of Honduras and the Tela Railroad interchange cars and services since their rail gauge is the same.

Aviation

Aviation plays an important role in domestic communications because many towns depend upon air transport for incoming supplies and outgoing produce. Scheduled domestic air service began as early as 1930, and there even were several unscheduled routes operating between the two coasts the previous year. By 1970 there were about 100 registered aircraft in the country; thirty-two towns and cities had scheduled flights, and an additional ninety-seven had unscheduled flights. The airfields of these latter towns were grass strips. The largest airfield is La Mesa at San Pedro Sula. It is an international jet airport and is owned by the municipality, which raised funds for its construction by selling bonds to local industries and individuals. The airport at Tegucigalpa cannot accommodate the larger jets.

Four airlines operate in the country, two of which provide international as well as domestic service. Air Service of Honduras (Servicio Aéreo de Honduras, S.A.—SAHSA) is the largest. It was organized in 1944 and is owned jointly by Pan American Airways, the Honduran government and private individuals. SAHSA operates thirteen aircraft, carries over 150,000 passengers annually, and flies to Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Columbia, British Honduras, and New Orleans. National Air Transport (Transportes Aéreos Nacionales, S.A.—TAN) carries passengers and freight on its three DC-7B aircraft and flies to Mexico, El Salvador, British Honduras, and Miami. National Airlines of Honduras (Aerovías Nacionales de Honduras, S.A.—ANHSA) operates only within the country and to the Bay Islands. Besides scheduled flights it provides charter services to towns off its scheduled routes. The fourth airline is Air Associates (Aero Asociados S.de R.L.), which provides only air taxi service using Cessnas.

Shipping

Several hundred vessels are registered, but most of them are flags of convenience ships, never calling at Honduran ports. Registration requirements are more lenient than in many other countries. There is only one legitimate domestic shipping line, the Honduran Steamship Company (Empresa Hondureña de Vapores, S.A.), which has about twenty-five vessels of between 2,000 and 8,000 registered tons each. About eighty small vessels are engaged in coastal shipping, but in 1970 only ten of them could carry more than 50 tons of cargo. These small craft also operate on three navigable rivers—the Patuca, navigable for sixty miles inland from the Atlantic; the Coco, forming part of the boundary with Nicaragua; and the Ulúa, running inland from the north-west Caribbean coast.

About 2 percent of maritime commerce consists of coastal shipping, although coastal vessels carry 75 percent of ship passengers. The vast majority of maritime commerce is foreign. There are five major ports on the Atlantic for international commerce, and seventeen minor ports are used for coastal shipping. The five major ones are Puerto Cortés, La Ceiba, Tela, Roatán, and Trujillo. Puerto Cortés is the most important, both in terms of tonnage and value of merchandise. It is the third busiest port in all of Central America. La Ceiba is the second most important domestic port. Puerto Cortés is operated by the National Ports Authority, a government entity that was expanding installations in 1970 to accommodate twice the original cargo capacity. The port of La Ceiba is administered by the Standard Fruit Company, and Tela is administered by the Tela Railroad.

There is one port on the south coast, Amapala, on Tigre Island, administered by the National Customs Administration. Ships have to offload their goods by lighters, which bring the merchandise to Amapala customs. The goods are then reshipped by lighter to the mainland town of San Lorenzo. Because of this, the handling costs in Amapala are the highest in Central America.

FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Trade

Foreign trade, both exports and imports, grew by an average annual rate of about 12 percent from 1959 to 1969, the second highest growth rate in Latin America. The 1968 rate was the highest of all of Latin America in that year. In 1969, because of a combination of bad weather and the war with El Salvador, there was a decrease in foreign trade. Imports dropped slightly, by 0.2 percent, to L369 million, while exports experienced a decrease of over 7 percent to L332 million (see table 6).

Only seventeen products account for 95 percent of all exports by value. About 75 percent are agricultural, bananas being the leading product, although there has been a gradual decline in the relative

Table 6. Foreign Trade of Honduras, 1960–69
(in millions of lempiras)*

	Export	Import
1960	123.8	143.5
1961	144.6	144.0
1962	159.6	159.6
1963	163.8	190.0
1964	183.7	203.3
1965	252.0	243.9
1966	288.3	298.1
1967	311.8	329.5
1968	357.9	369.4
1969	332.0	369.0

*2 lempiras equal US$1.

Source: Adapted from República de Honduras, Secretaría de Economíca y Hacienda, Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, *Comercio Exterior de Honduras: Exportación, 1968*, Tegucigalpa, 1969; and *El Día* [Tegucigalpa], July 14, 1970.

percentage share. Before the mid-1960s bananas accounted for 50 to 60 percent of all exports by value, but by 1968 the share had dropped to under 47 percent, even though the absolute amount had increased and the country was the second leading banana exporter in Latin America. Coffee is the second leading export, although its share had also been declining, falling to below 12 percent by 1968 from a high of over 17 percent in the early 1960s. Honduras is the fourth smallest coffee exporter in Latin America.

Wood and lumber has been occuping third place with 8 percent of exports, and the country is Latin America's second largest exporter of such products. In 1969, however, after several years of continual increases, lumber exports dropped because of small overseas demand. Live cattle and beef (fresh, frozen, and chilled) together accounted for over 5 percent of exports by 1969 after steadily increasing to surpass minerals as the fourth most important export. Exports of fresh, chilled, and frozen beef and veal soared from 409,000 pounds in 1958 to over 20 million pounds in 1969.

Silver, which was the fourth leading export until 1968, dropped to fifth place in 1969 with about 4 percent of the total. All other minerals, particularly lead and zinc, account for about 3 percent of exports. Cotton and beans each account for about 2 percent of exports. Cotton's share has been constantly dropping since 1960. All other products—corn, cement, tobacco, soap, clothing, canned fruit, sugar, chemicals, shoes, margarine, and miscellaneous items—are exported in lesser percentages.

Imports more than doubled during the decade of the 1960s. Consumer goods are the largest group, contributing about 40 percent of total imports, nondurables being the major portion. Raw materials for the growing industrial sector are in second place with about 27 percent. Capital goods usually account for slightly less than 26 percent, although in some years they have exceeded raw materials and were in second place. Fuels are a rapidly growing component of imports, accounting for 7 percent by 1968.

By commodities, machinery and transport equipment account for 30 percent of imports. Manufactured articles amount to another 30 percent, chemical products account for nearly 14 percent, and food products follow with 10 percent. Other items make up the balance.

Honduras exports its products to fifty countries, but over 98 percent of all exports go to only eighteen countries. The United States has always been the principal customer, but its relative share has been decreasing. In the late 1950s the United States took as much as 62 percent of Honduran exports, and by 1968 this had fallen to 44 percent, although the absolute amount had increased. In 1968 exports to the United States rose to over US$81 million, of which US$70 million were agricultural products. As of 1969 Honduras was the seventeenth leading supplier in the world of agricultural products to the United States. Bananas constitute the largest single item each year, and the country is always one of the three largest banana exporters to the United States. Coffee, beef, wood, and minerals are the other major products sold to the United States. Over 97 percent of Honduran meat exports goes to the United States and Puerto Rico, and the continuance of such trade is dependent upon the success of a voluntary import restraint program negotiated between the two countries, designed to permit a gradual rather than a steep increase in meat exports. Under this program the government of Honduras establishes export quotas for each packing plant.

West Germany is the second most important customer. It took annually increasing percentages through 1967, when it bought slightly over 24 percent of all exports. The percentage fell to about 19 percent in 1968. West Germany is the major purchaser of Honduran coffee. Bananas and lumber constitute almost all the other exports to West Germany.

Until the 1969 war with El Salvador, that country was Honduras's third best individual customer, taking 8 percent of exports. In fact, Honduras was El Salvador's second most important supplier, providing beans, pork, lumber, corn, soap, tobacco, and beef. Commercial relations between the two countries was almost nonexistent as of mid-1970; only postal and telecommunications services had been resumed. If the Central American Common Market is considered as a single grouping, then it is in third place as a customer of Honduras, absorbing almost 17 percent of exports. The common market's relative share has been increasing at the expense of the United States and West Germany. A large amount, almost 20 percent, of the exports to the common market are manufactures, whereas less than 2 percent of exports to the rest of the world are manufactured articles.

Beginning in 1969 numerous trade missions were sent abroad to find new markets, and some of them have been successful. Furthermore, sales to other countries have been increasing to the point where they are now important customers. For example, Belgium was taking about 5 percent of exports by 1968, and Japan was purchasing 4 percent. Japan is the major buyer of cotton. Canada buys more from Honduras than it does from any other Central American country, the imports consisting almost entirely of bananas.

Honduras imports goods from almost ninety countries, but the bulk of it, over 98 percent, comes from twenty-three countries; the United States, the Central American Common Market countries, West Germany, Japan, and the United Kingdom supply 85 percent between them. The United States has always been the prime supplier but, as with exports, its relative share has been decreasing. In the late 1950s the United States supplied over 60 percent of all imports. By 1968 this had fallen to 46 percent. Nonelectric machinery, paper, and chemicals are at the top of a long list of items imported from the United States. Most of the items are industrial and processed consumer goods, but large amounts of food are also imported from the United States. For example, almost 100 percent of imports of wheat and over 60 percent of flour and cereals come from the United States.

Until the 1969 war, El Salvador was the second largest supplier of imports, providing 12 percent. If the Central American Common Market is considered as a whole, it is in second place with 41 percent. Most of the imports from Central America are manufactured articles. Japan follows as the next leading supplier with over 5 percent, and West Germany, which has seen its share decrease, follows with almost 5 percent. Vehicles, machinery, steel products, and chemicals are the leading items imported from Japan and West Germany. Minimal percentages are imported from other countries. Less than 1 percent of all imports come from Communist countries.

Aid and Investment

The country has been a major recipient of foreign aid since the end of World War II. Almost all of the aid is in the form of loans, and the proceeds are used for infrastructure projects for economic development. For example, at the end of 1969 loans were in effect for various projects—including, among others, fifteen for transportation, two for health, two for education, three for agriculture, and three for communications.

In 1968 the finance minister estimated that development plans from that year through 1972 would require the equivalent of US$150 million in foreign loans. More loans have already been made available to the country, however, than it can effectively utilize or absorb. For example, as of March 31, 1970, there was almost US$88 million of unused credits from previously negotiated and approved loans.

Loans are received from many sources. As of 1970 the Central American Bank for Economic Integration was becoming the most important source, but the United States, particularly the Agency for International Development (AID) had provided the largest accumulated amount. From 1941 through 1969 the United States had authorized over US$60 million in credits, of which about half had actually been utilized. Most loans have been made for highway construction or power expansion, but AID has made loans for such other purposes as educational programs and malaria eradication.

As of 1969 international organizations had authorized about US$100 million; the International Bank for Reconstruction and

Development group (the bank, the International Development Association, and the International Finance Corporation) was the most important, having granted nearly US$47 million in loans mainly for roadbuilding and power expansion. The Inter-American Development Bank is another important source of loan funds. The International Monetary Fund had negotiated ten standby agreements through 1969 designed to protect the value of the lempira. The latest, signed in February 1969, authorized purchase of US$11 million in foreign currencies by Honduras. The largest drawing, however, that the government had to make against the standby as of May 1970 has been only US$4.75 million. A small technical cooperation program has been carried out by Israel since 1967.

In addition to foreign aid, foreign investment has also greatly stimulated economic development. The two private United States fruit companies play the major role and have made investments in other areas besides banana plantations. The mining industry has been led by the New York and Honduran Rosario Mining Company. In 1969 it was estimated that there was over US$265 million of foreign investment in the country, the major share consisting of United States companies. There is more foreign investment in Honduras than in any Central American country, and the amount is estimated to be increasing at an average annual rate of 8 percent.

Central American Common Market

Much of the country's economic growth is traceable to the stimulation of the Central American Common Market (CACM), composed of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica as of 1970. The CACM is generally considered to be one of the most successful economic integration movements despite the dislocations caused by the 1969 conflict between Honduras and El Salvador. Despite the benefits that the CACM has brought to Honduras, that country remains one of the least enthusastic members because of continual fears that it will not develop as fast as the others and that it will become an agricultural supplier to the more industrially developed members. A number of special concessions have been made to it, such as those connected with the fiscal incentives program, but the country still remains the last to ratify the various integration treaties.

The ground work of the CACM was laid in 1951 with the formation of the Organization of Central American States. The following year the Central American Economic Cooperation Committee, with a permanent staff, was formed to devise ways to integrate the area's economies. A few bilateral trade agreements resulted as well as some regional institutions. The Central American School of Public Administration was founded in 1954; the Central American Institute of Industrial Research and Technology began in 1956; and uniform highway codes were signed in 1956.

In 1958 one of the most important of the treaties was signed—the Multilateral Treaty on Central American Free Trade and Economic Development. That treaty, which became effective for Honduras in 1960, provided for free trade between the members on about 20 percent of the items in a common tariff nomenclature and called for eventual free trade on the other items. In 1960 Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador negotiated a treaty between themselves granting free trade on all goods originating in their countries with a few stated exceptions. This agreement stimulated the development in December of 1960 of the two most important of the CACM's treaties: The General Treaty of Central American Economic Integration and the Convention Chartering the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

The General Treaty became effective for each member on different dates. For Honduras it was effective in 1962. The treaty provided for immediate free trade on all but a few items among all the signatories as of the effective dates, and further negotiations were planned to eliminate trade barriers on the small balance. By 1970 tariffs had been eliminated on about 98 percent of the items traded within the CACM. A common external tariff is in effect for 95 percent of the goods coming from nonmembers. Corn, wheat, alcoholic beverages, and petroleum products were the more important exceptions. National tariffs apply to the exceptions.

The elimination of tariffs between members greatly stimulated intraregional trade. For statistical purposes an imaginary Central American peso equivalent to one United States dollar is utilized. From 6 million CA pesos in 1960, intraregional trade steadily climbed to almost 260 million CA pesos in 1968. The dispute between Honduras and El Salvador caused the 1969 figure to fall to 240 million CA pesos, the first decline in the history of the CACM. Preliminary statistics for early 1970 indicated a rate below the 1969 figure. In almost every year Honduras had a deficit with the other members, importing more from them than it exported.

The Central American Bank for Economic Integration is located in Honduras and is designed to promote balanced economic development of the area. As a result, Honduras has received the largest percentage of loans made by the bank, over 25 percent. Since its inception through 1969, the bank had lent the equivalent of about US$172 million to all members, and its resources totaled over US$250 million. Its resources have come from members' contributions, loans from international agencies, and foreign governments. A Central American clearinghouse to settle intraregional trade balances also is located in Honduras. Uniform letters of credit are utilized, and every six months debits and credits between the members' central banks are offset and net balances are settled among them. In 1970 a monetary stabilization fund began operation to provide financial assistance for members having balance of payments difficulties. The fund received its resources from the International Monetary Fund, CACM members, and foreign governments, such as the United States and Venezuela.

After several years of success, 1969 and 1970 were considered crisis years for the CACM. The Honduras-El Salvador conflict not only stopped trade between the two countries but also hindered their trade with other members because goods were not being transshipped through their countries. In addition, each CACM member had embargoed certain products for varying periods of time despite the free trade principle. Grains were particularly affected, as each country appeared to have a temporary surplus of some type of cereal. There was an acknowledged need to create some type of court to hear the merits of trade complaints. There was an increasing number of retaliatory measures between members for alleged infringements of the various agreements. One such popular measure was the requirement of depositing a cash bond as a guarantee that the goods in question were actually of Central American origin. Lastly, a number of important agreements had not been ratified by all members. As of the end of 1969, nine of the thirty-two agreements relating to the workings of the CACM still were not in force, and two of the nine had been pending since 1963.

Hopeful signs were observed in August 1970 when El Salvador and Honduras commenced bilateral talks in Costa Rica to settle their differences and an ad hoc committee was to begin deliberations in Guatemala in September 1970 to seek ways to preserve and organize the institutions of the CACM.

CHAPTER 9

ARMED FORCES AND INTERNAL SECURITY

The armed forces are responsible for defense of the nation against foreign invasion, preservation of internal order, and assistance in economic development. Of these, the preservation of domestic order has traditionally been the security forces' primary concern. This situation was temporarily altered in the aftermath of the 1969 war with El Salvador, and external considerations predominated throughout most of 1970. The security forces' ability to cope with external problems, nevertheless, remained fairly limited. Most of the military and paramilitary forces have been involved in police work, regional force duty, or civic action. The first modern-style combat unit was not established until the mid-1950s, and the number of regular troops thoroughly prepared for combat roles has been small.

Military manpower can be greatly expanded in wartime, but the strength of the regular armed forces is about 4,000 to 5,000 men apportioned among regional units, a number of special army corps, and the air force. Most combat-oriented ground forces are found within the special corps.

Police functions are assigned to the Special Security Corps (Cuerpo Especial de Seguridad—CES), which replaced the Civil Guard in 1963. The CES is a separate organization outside the jurisdiction of military commanders. Most CES members, however, come from the regular armed forces, and relations with the military services are very close. The corps, made up of between 2,000 and 3,000 men, is headquartered in Tegucigalpa, the capital, and most specialized police elements are also located there. As of mid-1970 the structure of the organization was being revised by top government and CES leaders.

ARMED FORCES AND THE GOVERNMENT

Background

During the nineteenth century military influence was diluted by a dearth of training, discipline, organization, and equipment. Largely because of this, the armed forces occasionally split along political lines, and limited civil wars frequently broke out between armed bands supporting one political faction or another. The situation was aggravated by neighboring countries, which dominated the nation's politics and sometimes organized filibustering expeditions to overturn the government (see ch. 2, Historical Setting; ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics). These neighbors lost much of their influence early in the twentieth century, but no concerted efforts to improve military training and performance were made until 1949. Before then the military establishment's continued shortcomings limited both its prestige and its usefulness in maintaining political stability.

Modernization of the armed forces, including both improved training and equipment, began under President Juan Manuel Gálvez (1949–54) and was continued under the military junta that seized power in 1956. Riding a wave of public acclaim, the junta prompted promulgation of a new constitution in 1957 that theoretically gave the armed forces considerable autonomy and established their constitutional right to influence political events under some circumstances.

Since the late 1950s there have been few changes in this basic legal structure. The government of Ramón Villeda Morales (1957–63) maintained the policy of limited military modernization, even while attempting to reduce service influence by building up a separate Civil Guard. The regular armed forces' dissatisfaction with this arrangement is generally cited as one of the factors responsible for the 1963 coup, which swept the chief of the armed forces, Osvaldo López Arellano, into the presidency. The Civil Guard was then replaced with the Special Security Crops, which was more closely aligned with the regular armed forces. Although a new constitution regularizing the López government was promulgated in 1965, the clauses affecting the military's relation to the government remained essentially the same as in the 1957 document. In late 1970 a new armed forces constitutive law was approved by Congress, but its details were not known.

Since 1949 improved training, better discipline, and institutionalization of the regular armed forces have affected the nation's political stability. During President Tiburcio Cariás Andino's term of office (1932–48), the National Party was the organized vehicle used to keep the established government in office (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics). With the slow degeneration of this party in the 1950s and the improved organization and discipline of the armed forces, the latter showed an increased tendency to act as the arbiter of national politics. This role was assumed in 1957 and 1963 in order to bring down the government, but for the most part the armed forces have chosen to remain united behind existing regimes. The resulting tendency for governments to stay in office for prolonged periods contrasted with the frequent and, at times, anarchic political transformations that preceded the Carías government.

The Constitution and the Armed Forces

Though the 1965 Constitution specifies that the armed forces will be "essentially professional, nonpolitical, obedient, and nondeliberative," other provisions confer a high degree of legal autonomy on the military establishment. The president is designated commander in chief of the armed forces. In addition, Article 325 gives the armed forces the explicit right to disobey any order that is believed to violate "the letter or the spirit of the Constitution."

Presidential and Congressional Powers

The president has the power to declare war and make peace while Congress is not in session, but such action precipitates an immediate special legislative session. While Congress is in session it has exclusive jurisdiction in this area. Likewise, the president can issue a decree temporarily suspending constitutional guarantees, but his action is subject to congressional approval. If Congress is not in session at the time, this too results in automatic convocation of a special session. Congress has the right to grant foreign troops permission to enter the country, but when it is adjourned such power devolves upon the president. The chief executive can send Honduran troops to serve in foreign countries, but prior authorization by Congress is constitutionally required.

Similarly, Congress and the president share the power to confer rank on military officers, the president naming all officers up to captain on the recommendation of the armed forces chief. All higher ranks are conferred by Congress at the initiative of the president and the armed forces chief. Congress is also empowered to fix the strength of the permanent army and can regulate military expenditures by amending or approving the president's annual budgetary proposals.

Since the president almost always controls Congress, limitations on his ability to act in the military fields are more apparent than real. The only effective limitations on his prerogatives are the requirement that he work through the armed forces chief and the explicitly stated right of "constitutional" disobedience.

Military Command Structure

Below the president but outside the direct chain of command are the secretary of defense, the Department of Defense, and the Superior Council of National Defense. The secretary is a member of the Council of Ministers and directs the department, which deals with administrative matters affecting the armed forces. Since he exercises no command function and is not required as an intermediary for dealings between armed forces leaders and the president, he has generally had limited influence.

The Superior Council of National Defense is an advisory body composed of the president, the secretary of defense, the chief of the armed forces, the chief of staff of the armed forces, and all top military commanders. Its principal function is selecting candidates to fill the post of chief of the armed forces when that job becomes vacant.

The chief of the armed forces occupies the highest and most powerful military office in the country. To be eligible, candidates for the position must be native-born senior officers. Final selection is made by Congress from a list of three names presented by the Superior Council of National Defense. The specified term of office for an armed forces chief is six years, though in theory he may be removed by a two-thirds vote of Congress at any time.

Formal operational control extends directly from the office of the armed forces chief to all subordinate commands. In addition, the armed forces chief is in charge of all military assignments, including the appointment of all unit and zone commanders. The only exceptions are administrative appointments and appointments to the presidential general staff and presidential guard, which are made by the chief executive.

A general staff assists the chief of the armed forces at his headquarters; if the armed forces chief is absent, the chief of the general staff takes his place. If the top post is permanently vacant, the Superior Council of National Defense must present a new list of three candidates to Congress within fifteen days.

Below the top level the country is divided into six military zones, but the most prominent and best trained units are contained in the air force and the army special corps, which are outside the jurisdiction of zone commanders. Special ground forces include the Presidential Honor Guard; the presidential staff; the first, second, and third infantry battalions; and the First Engineer Battalion.

The Military Establishment and the National Economy

National budgetary expenditures rose rapidly between 1940 and 1970, outstripping a slower rise in military spending. The percentage of the budget allotted to defense therefore declined significantly even though the amount spent in 1970 was at least six times as great as it had been thirty years before. In 1968 defense expenditures amounted to about the equivalent of US$8 million, which was approximately 10 percent of the total budget for that year. In 1939 the budget came to only the equivalent of US$4.5 million, so that defense spending was much more limited even though it consumed some 25 percent of the total budget (see ch. 8, The Economy). Defense expenditures have generally been conservative and have imposed no major burden on the economy. During the 1960s defense spending appeared stabilized at between 1 and 2 percent of the gross national product (GNP); it was still unclear in mid-1970 how much this level of spending might change in the aftermath of the 1969 war with El Salvador (see ch. 1, General Character of the Society; ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

The regular armed forces have generally constituted only about 0.2 percent of the population, so that withdrawal of recruits from civilian jobs has not greatly affected the economy during peacetime. The effect on the money economy is further reduced by the fact that many recruits are illiterate rural dwellers who have had little contact with the more modern sectors of the economy before joining the armed forces. The economy, in fact, profits from the service experience of such recruits, who often receive literacy training and instruction in such subjects as agriculture, which they can use after returning to civilian life. Substantial economic gains are also produced by an extensive armed forces civic action program. The situation is different during hostilities, when large numbers of civilians may be temporarily taken into the armed forces under circumstances affording little chance for such nonmilitary training.

Civic Action

During the 1960s Honduras developed one of the most aggressive civic action programs in Latin America, and civic action efforts received wide publicity within the country. The role of civic action was recognized in the Constitution of 1965, which specifies in Article 320 that the armed forces will collaborate with the executive branch in the fields of education, agriculture, literacy, communications, highways, conservation of natural resources, health, land settlement, and emergency activities.

Major projects designed to assist economic development have generally been planned and coordinated by the civic action office of the armed forces. The office is headed by a director of civic action with the rank of major, who exercises control over the whole civic action program. Most of the projects provide service in the areas of education, health, agriculture, communications, highway construction, or job training. Long-term projects have usually been avoided, partly because difficulties have arisen in maintaining the interests of both the community and the participating troops until such projects can be completed.

In the area of education the civic action program has concentrated on construction and maintenance of schools and equipment; various types of assistance for literacy training and cultural activities have also been provided. Between 1962 and 1965 about 500 classrooms were built under a rural school construction program in eleven departments financed by a US$1.2-million loan from the United States. The armed forces have also conducted vocational training classes in mechanics-oriented subjects for military personnel and civilians.

Agricultural activities have included efforts to improve breeds by providing nationwide animal husbandry services, instruction in improved farming methods, and construction of farm buildings and sanitation facilities in rural areas. A major campaign has also been initiated to eradicate the bark beetle that threatened the nation's pine forests in the 1960s (see ch. 8, The Economy).

The health program has involved medical visits to isolated villages, distribution of food and clothing, public instruction on modern sanitation and health practices, emergency assistance to flood-stricken areas, and provision of free lunches and medical attention to children in Tegucigalpa and other cities.

Road construction and maintenance activities linked to the civic action program have opened up new areas for settlement and have facilitated commercial activities in some places. Besides building major roads, military teams have constructed improved penetration roads, parks, streets, sewer systems, cemeteries, bridges, and communication lines in various parts of the country.

Supplementing these activities, the air force conducts a separate and highly successful program that has been partly responsible for the popularity enjoyed by that service among the public at large. Called Wings for Health (Alas para la Salud), its basic function is to provide medical services to isolated and needy people in cooperation with both national and foreign agencies. The program includes a free public medical dispensary at the front gate of Toncontín Air Base, another free dispensary for military personnel and needy civilians in Tegucigalpa, and a system for air evacuation of emergency medical cases from all parts of the country. The air force also flies medical and dental students to remote areas to provide free assistance to isolated residents and provides transportation for rural cargoes and passengers.

In other fields the air arm has been involved in growing and distributing native fruit trees, constructing public buildings and sanitary facilities, and providing instruction in agricultural techniques. As of June 1969 civic action teams were sent out frequently, and every Sunday the air force presented a televised civic action report to the general public. Another separate civic action program is carried out by the paramilitary CES.

In general, civic action programs have been well publicized and have succeeded in improving the image of the armed forces. They have also made contributions to economic growth and to bringing isolated regions into contact with the rest of the world. At times, however, they have not achieved their maximum potential, either because of planning shortcomings or failure to obtain support from the local population.

MANPOWER AND TRAINING

The Constitution of 1965 makes military service compulsory for all citizens. During peacetime, however, the armed forces are composed almost entirely of volunteers, and large-scale conscription is rarely necessary. All male citizens are liable for peacetime military duty between the ages of eighteen and thirty-two, and they can be required to serve as long as eighteen months. In the event of international war, the Constitution specifies that all citizens, without distinction, must perform military service.

Toward the end of the 1960s the size of the regular armed forces was around 4,500 men; this did not include members of the armed forces transferred to the CES. There was also a reserve force consisting of men between eighteen and fifty-five years of age who could be called to substitute for the regular army during wartime or when the army was on field maneuvers.

Between the end of World War II and 1970 there were steady and marked improvements in military training. Initially, a large share of specialized instruction and officer training was conducted by United States advisory personnel, but by the mid-1950s many educational tasks had been taken over by Hondurans. The armed forces still make extensive use of the United States Army's School of the Americas in the Canal Zone, however, to provide specialized training for officers and enlisted men outside the country. From the inception of the school (then known as the United States Army Caribbean School) in 1949 until the mid-1960s, a total of about 800 Honduran armed forces members had attended courses there.

The Officer Corps

Until about 1960 most officers came up through the enlisted ranks, though some attained their rank by attending military academies in other Latin American countries. This situation began changing in 1957, when the Francisco Morazán Military School accepted its first cadets from civilian life. By 1970 most junior officers were graduates of this school.

During the late 1940s the United States Military Mission to Honduras conducted the only training course in the country for officer candidates. The course was superseded in 1952 when the Francisco Morazán Military School began training enlisted men for promotion to officer rank, but the civilian-based cadet program did not begin until the school was reorganized in 1957.

The United States Military Mission has also provided training for commissioned officers, notably members of the First Infantry Battalion stationed near the capital. In addition, officers have attended specialized courses at the School of the Americas, and a few have studied at army school facilities in the United States. This training, together with limited enrollment in courses at European military schools, has helped compensate for the absence of any advanced career officer schools in Honduras.

There is little evidence of racial or class discrimination in selection of officers, and admission to the Francisco Morazán Military School is based primarily on educational requirements. Specifically, those selected for admission must be physically fit primary school graduates less than eighteen years of age and must successfully complete a competitive entrance examination based on primary school subjects. Competition for admission is stiff, the annual ratio of applicants to selectees being as high as fifteen to one. Because of shortcomings in the national education system, these selection procedures eliminate most of the candidates from rural areas from consideration and tend indirectly to favor the wealthier and better educated groups in the larger towns and cities.

The curriculum at Francisco Morazán comprises both nonmilitary secondary school subjects and military training; room, board, and tuition are provided free along with uniforms, equipment, medical and dental care, and a modest cash allowance. After five years of study, graduating cadets receive the equivalent of a high school diploma and the rank of army sublieutenant, equivalent to United States Army second lieutenant. They are then granted scholarships for one additional year of military study abroad, usually at the School of the Americas.

Enlisted Personnel

Military service often represents the recruit's first contact with the modern world—a world otherwise out of reach for the average Honduran peasant—and in many cases armed forces instruction represents his first and only brush with any sort of formal education. In addition, the recruit is given a uniform and shoes, fed a balanced diet, and provided with medical treatment. For such reasons the armed forces are widely considered an elite organization, particularly in rural zones.

The government and armed forces are aware of this social potential of military training and service, and they have taken measures to improve nonmilitary opportunities available to the average recruit when he leaves the service. Cadets at the Francisco Morazán Military School are trained to teach literacy to adults under their command, and many illiterate recruits who enter the service are taught to read and write. Soldiers are also given instruction in hygiene, trades, and citizenship. Those who were farmers are frequently taught new agricultural techniques shortly before returning to civilian life.

Except in special commands, such as the air force, the Presidential Honor Guard, and the First Infantry Battalion, regular military training of personnel is limited. Individual units provide training sufficient to perform normal garrison duty, however, and there are opportunities for obtaining additional training in some cases.

Beginning in the early 1950s the Francisco Morazán Military School offered rifle and artillery courses, in addition to courses for noncommissioned officers and officer candidates. Relatively advanced training has been carried out in the army's major combat unit, the First Infantry Battalion, as well as in other special corps. Air force cadets, pilots, and technicians receive fairly extensive training at the Military Aviation School near Tegucigalpa. Such training is often supplemented by courses at training schools in the United States, and the United States Military Mission provides assistance in some cases where specialized enlisted instruction is required.

MISSION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES

The primary missions of the armed forces are to preserve the integrity of the nation and to maintain internal security. Military combat units are maintained in a state of readiness to defend the country and implement government policies. Army and air force units are also used to maintain internal order, especially during times of crisis, but the primary organ charged with day-to-day maintenance of public order and internal security is the autonomous CES. In addition, the defense establishment is officially charged with carrying out civic action projects in cooperation with the executive branch of the government and with upholding the Constitution, especially those provisions preventing the chief executive from succeeding himself in office.

Military commands subordinated to the armed forces chief include the air force, the special army corps, the six military zone commands, and a number of support elements. All active military units except the Presidential Honor Guard and staff are commanded by the chief of the armed forces, assisted by a general staff operating at armed forces headquarters in the capital.

Ground Forces

During the mid-1960s the army had a strength of about 3,500 men. Combat elements were organized into more than twenty infantry companies and one artillery battery. Besides small arms, such as M—1 rifles, 45-caliber pistols, and handgrenades, the weapons inventory included 30-caliber machineguns, 50-caliber antiaircraft guns, 60-mm and 81-mm mortars, small howitzers, and 75-mm recoilless rifles.

Military Zone Commands

For administrative purposes the nation is divided into six military zones, each of which is under the jurisdiction of a territorial command. These local units have the function of maintaining a military presence throughout the country, particularly in remote and isolated areas. The great variation in the importance of these commands is reflected in the widely fluctuating number of men assigned to different areas and the varying size of the populations and land areas within each zone's region of responsibility. It is also reflected in the rank of zone commanders, which may vary several grades from one zone to another.

With respect to internal structure, each military zone is subdivided into departments corresponding to the nation's eighteen civil governmental regions; each department is then further divided into districts and each district into cantons (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics). Assignments vary with needs, but in theory authorized military strength corresponds roughly to a battalion for each zone, a company for each department, a platoon for each district, and a squad for each canton. Discipline and training are generally more relaxed in the zone commands than they are within the specialized units operating outside the territorial command system.

Special Army Units

The bulk of the army's combat-ready strength is contained in a number of special units, most of which are under the direct command of the armed forces chief. The principal special units are the Presidential Honor Guard; the first, second, and third infantry battalions, and the First Engineer Battalion. Other special elements include the Francisco Morazán Military School, the presidential staff, and a variety of support units specializing in such things as medical services, military justice, military police work, communications, and equipment maintenance.

The Presidential Honor Guard is the only major military unit outside the immediate jurisdiction of the armed forces chief. From the date of its official dedication in August 1968 through mid-1970, the guard was personally commanded by the president of the Republic, Brigadier General Osvaldo López Arellano. Its dark-green uniform with red trimmings has distinguished it from other units, and its size-roughly 1,000 men—makes it as large as any single command within the armed forces. Guard headquarters is located at Las Tapias, a few miles southwest of Tegucigalpa; the command's component elements are four companies with a total strength of about 900 men, a military police unit, a brass band, and a drum and bugle corps.

The First Infantry Battalion, based on the outskirts of Tegucigalpa near the Military Aviation School, is another elite unit. As reported in the armed forces magazine *Revista Militar de Honduras*, the battalion was set up in 1947 with United States assistance in order to create a modern combat element within the armed forces. Throughout the 1960s it served as the army's leading combat-ready unit and a major center for military training. Favorable reaction to the First Infantry Battalion provided impetus for subsequent creation of the second and third infantry battalions.

Another special group is the corps of engineers organized into the First Engineer Battalion. As in the case of the three infantry battalions, its commander is immediately subordinate to the chief of the armed forces. In addition to its other duties, the engineer-battalion has been the unit in charge of major military civic action road construction projects. Among its more notable accomplishments during the 1960s were the construction of a twenty-four-mile highway connecting several communities in northeastern Comayagua Department, the eastward extension of the Juticalpa-Catacamas Highway in Olancho Department, and the completion of a connecting link between Florida and El Paraíso in Copán Department.

Air Forces

In comparison with other nations of Latin America, the Honduran air arm constitutes an unusually large and well-equipped segment of the nation's armed forces. An autonomous organization under the chief of the armed forces, it operates as a single composite unit based at the international airport of Toncontín near Tegucigalpa. The Military Aviation School is attached to this air force complex.

At different times the air force inventory has included fighter planes (NAA F51D); fighter bombers (F4U Corsairs); light bombers (Douglas B-26); transports (Beech C-45, C-46, C-47, and Convair PBY); trainers (NAA T-6, Lockheed T-33, Beech AT-11, PT13, PT17, Fairchild PT-23, and NA-16); and miscellaneous aircraft, including the Cessna 180 Liaison plane and the Sikorsky S-52 helicopter. In the mid-1960s more F4Us were reported on hand than any other type of aircraft.

During the short 1969 war with El Salvador the air force inflicted the only major damage on Salvadorean territory by bombing and setting fire to oil company facilities (see ch. 1, General Character of the Society; ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics). To a degree, this incident was symbolic of the high level of air force activity in every military sphere almost since its inception. Reacting to an escalating internal crisis in 1956, for example, air force planes flying over Tegucigalpa signaled the beginning of the coup that ousted President Julio Lozano Diaz. In more tranquil times the air force has provided key communications and transport links with isolated areas in conjunction with its civic action work.

The rugged terrain and limited road system have stimulated both civilian and military flight operations (see ch. 8, The Economy; ch. 3, Physical Environment and Living Conditions). In mid-1969 the nation possessed approximately eighty-five usable airfields and two seaplane stations with widely varying facilities. Geographic factors limited Toncontín International Airport near Tegucigalpa to heavy propeller-driven transports, but jets were able to operate at La Mesa International Airport serving San Pedro Sula.

Naval Forces

There is no navy per se, but the armed forces have a very limited coastal patrol capability in the form of one converted forty-foot utility boat. This vessel is manned by a small contingent of army personnel.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Military benefits and pay scales have improved since 1949. From 1933 to 1949 the army was poorly paid and poorly equipped, but the situation began to improve markedly in the 1950s, although as late as 1955 an editorial in the official Honduran military magazine contained a complaint about low military pay rates. The author recommended across-the-board salary increases based on grade, time in service, size of family, and living costs in the various military zones. No precise wage figures are available, but pay rates and fringe benefits have increased significantly since then. Living conditions have also improved, as indicated by the construction of new quarters, a military hospital, post exchanges, and other facilities. Most of these improvements appear to have had the greatest impact on facilities in or near the cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. The fact that most conscription requirements are met by volunteers demonstrates the appeal of a military career.

Pensions and retirement benefits are covered by the Organic Military Law of March 1954, which authorizes them as a stimulus to enlistment and a reward to those who have done useful or heroic work for the armed forces. Those eligible for pensions include disabled and retired veterans as well as the families of servicemen killed while on active duty. Military personnel may retire at age forty-five. The Institute of Military Welfare was created by the Constitution of 1965 to protect the well-being and social security of all armed forces members.

RANK, UNIFORMS, AND INSIGNIA

Rank structure is similar to that used in the United States Army, particularly in the officer corps. The rank of sublieutenant corresponds to that of second lieutenant and that of lieutenant to first lieutenant. The rest of the rank structure follows the United States pattern up to the general officer level. In theory, the two general officer ranks, brigade and division generals, are the counterparts of the United States brigadier and major generals, respectively; but in reality these general ranks are rarely used, and top officer billets are usually filled by colonels and lieutenant colonels.

The armed forces have adopted the rank insignia proposed by the Central American Defense Council (Consejo de Defensa Centroamericano—CONDECA) for everything but general officer ranks. CONDECA officer insignia consist of one, two, or three gold bars for company grade officers, in order of increasing seniority, and one, two, or three gold stars for the three field grades. There have been several changes in the Honduran generals' insignia over the past few decades, but the style authorized in the late 1960s for a brigade general was four silver stars arranged in a row like the three gold stars of a full colonel. The same insignia are worn by army and air force personnel.

CONDECA-proposed enlisted insignia have also been adopted, but as late as mid-1969 many enlisted personnel were wearing old insignia because the new types were still in short supply. These older insignia consist of gold chevrons on a navy-blue background. Technical grades are designated by a *T* placed under the chevrons.

Basic types of uniforms are fatigue, service, and dress. The olive-green fatigue uniform is similar to United States Army fatigues; with substitution of a helmet for the standard cloth cap and addition of a canvas belt and short khaki leggings, it becomes the field uniform. Fatigues are the usual work uniform, whereas the field uniform is worn for field exercises, guard duty, reviews, and parades.

The service dress uniform has summer and winter variations, and each variant has several different styles. The summer uniform is khaki; the winter variant is olive green. Either garrison caps or service caps may be worn with these uniforms. The service uniform is generally used for light duty, office work, or social occasions when dress uniforms are not required.

Dress uniforms are worn by officers and come in two styles. The regular dress uniform has navy-blue trousers with a gold stripe down the leg, a white shirt, a black tie, and a jacket that is either white or navy blue, depending on the climate. Epaulets are worn with this uniform, and cordons are authorized for the president, some staff members, and attachés abroad. The full dress uniform is tuxedo style consisting of blue-black trousers with gold side-seam, white dress shirt, black bow tie, vest, and open jacket with three gold buttons on either side. In the summer version the jacket is white, but in cold climates a blue-black jacket is worn. Epaulets, white gloves, and a navy-blue hat with black bill and gold chinstrap complete the uniform. This same hat is worn with the regular dress uniform.

Enlisted rank insignia are worn on the upper sleeve in most cases, whereas officer uniforms generally carry the rank insignia on the collar. Enlisted personnel wear their branch insignia on one side of the collar and a gold button with the letters *R.H.* (Republic of Honduras) on the other. Corps insignia, in addition to rank, are worn on the sleeve near the shoulder. Officer rank insignia are worn on the shoulder of jackets, which are used with one style of service dress and both dress uniforms. Branch insignia or patches are worn on the sleeve with fatigues, on the collar with plain service dress, and on the lapels of the service dress jacket.

Air force personnel are distinguished from other service members by distinctive corps insignia; in addition, officers wear wings on one shirt or jacket pocket of the service dress uniforms.

The two major national awards are the Decoration for Merit and the Heroic Valor Decoration. The former, considered the nation's highest military award, comes in several classes and may be awarded to foreigners as well as to native Hondurans. The Heroic Valor Decoration is designed to reward exceptional heroism and is awarded by the president of the Republic at the request of top armed forces leaders. Other awards include the Distinguished Service Cross for meritorious service; the Distinguished Service Medal; the Flying Cross; the Soldier's Medal for outstanding enlisted performance; the Medal for Technical Merit; and the Conduct Medal. Distribution of these decorations is limited, though it is common to see several worn by a career serviceman.

FOREIGN MILITARY RELATIONS

Military Assistance

Since World War II the nation's traditionally warm relations with the United States have produced significant bilateral military cooperation. In 1954 Honduras signed a military assistance pact, under which the United States dispatched military advisers to determine the country's training and equipment needs. Subsequently, the United States provided various types of equipment in addition to training for military personnel. In 1967 a small number of United States military advisers were still stationed in the country.

Honduras has assisted in international military operations, such as dispatching medical supplies to the Republic of South Vietnam during the latter part of the 1960s and early 1970 and giving military assistance to the Organization of American States during the Dominican crisis of 1965. In the latter case it contributed a military force of about 250 men to the Inter-American Peace Force operating in the Dominican Republic.

Military Conflicts

Until the latter part of the 1960s the prime external military concern of the armed forces was related to the nation's eastern boundary with Nicaragua. The longstanding border dispute involving this area was settled in the early 1960s. Minor clashes occurred, however, after the settlement, and the military presence in Gracias a Dios Department remained out of proportion to the area's sparse population. Concern over this region, however, was eclipsed by the war with El Salvador that broke out in 1969 (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

During the 1969 war the Honduran Air Force carried out successful actions, but the army was unable to penetrate Salvadorean territory and suffered a significant number of casualties in the Nueva Ocotepeque area. After the outbreak of hostilities the armed forces called up large numbers of civilians in accordance with Article 321 of the 1965 Constitution. Although filling immediate manpower requirements, this action tended to aggravate military logistics problems and to increase the difficulty of maintaining effective discipline. The short-lived nature of the conflict provided little opportunity for raw recruits to adjust themselves to combat conditions.

As of mid-1970 the two countries had agreed on a security zone plan later endorsed by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States. This plan provided for a buffer zone at least 1.8 miles wide on either side of the ill-defined border. No military or paramilitary forces would be permitted within this zone except for patrols of less than thirteen men armed with pistols and M-1 rifles. Aircraft would be barred from flying over a six-mile-wide border strip as well as the Gulf of Fonseca on the south coast.

PUBLIC ORDER

No crime statistics are available, but several generalizations may be made with respect to criminal patterns and internal threats to public order. Law enforcement agencies are only lightly represented in rural areas, and it is common for countryfolk to settle their differences among themselves. Major violence, disorders, strikes, and protest activities directed against major industries or the government are generally urban based. Such actions sometimes set off sympathetic events in the countryside, but most rural incidents of concern to law enforcement agencies are acts of common criminals or spontaneous private disputes. As of mid-1970 no reports of Communist guerrilla activity had ever been confirmed.

Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula have provided the major breeding grounds for crime in the past, as well as focal points for public disorders, and the military and police forces are heavily concentrated there. Since the political-industrial polarization of the two urban centers in recent times, antigovernment disturbances have tended to center on Tegucigalpa, and strikes and labor protests have predominated in San Pedro Sula (see ch. 2, Historical Setting; ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics; ch. 8, The Economy).

Administration of Justice

Legal Codes

Legal procedures have tended to endure without much change for long periods, and those of 1970 are still similar to the ones implemented shortly after the turn of the twentieth century. The nation's penal regulations are based on a code adopted in 1906; the code in turn closely resembles previous ones dating from 1866 and 1880 that were copied with minor changes from Spanish and Chilean penal codes of the mid-nineteenth century. The structure of the judicial branch is essentially that outlined in the Law of Court Organization and Attributes, which also dates from 1906.

In general, the legal system is set up along lines established by Roman and Spanish law, like those of most other Latin American countries. The legal system also has another feature common to many Latin American countries in that its constitution contains a large number of detailed guarantees and rules affecting law enforcement. The Constitution of 1965 prohibits capital punishment, limits military court jurisdiction to military personnel on active duty, bars arrest without warrant, places strict limits on pretrial detention, sets maximum legal punishment at thirty years in jail, recognizes the right of political asylum, prohibits expatriation of any Honduran citizen, and proscribes search of private residences except under special circumstances. The Constitution also guarantees freedom of speech, press, and assembly, although outdoor political meetings may require special government permission for the purpose of ensuring public order. Possession of firearms without a permit is prohibited (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

Court System

The court system is composed of the Supreme Court of Justice, appeals courts, trial courts, and courts directed by a justice of the peace. There are also special courts, such as military courts, labor courts, and rent courts. In 1968 there were roughly 1,000 practicing lawyers in the country.

The lowest courts, presided over by justices of the peace, cannot hear criminal cases; these are usually taken first to the trial courts presided over by a single judge and located in major cities and departmental capitals. Military misdemeanors are generally tried first in military courts, located in departmental capitals and all port cities. Local military commanders have authority to preside over these courts so long as they are citizens over twenty-one years old with the rank of lieutenant colonel or above.

During war or a state of siege, military jurisdiction is exercised by councils of war, which are set up in each department. Each council is composed of three judges, who are senior officers, and three alternates and is competent to deal with all cases of military crime committed within the department. In addition, during war a Subaltern Council of War is set up and located near the troops in the field. There is only one such council while the army remains united, but should it be split up other subaltern councils may be formed. Appeals of trial court and military court decisions are handled by the appeals courts, composed of three civilian judges, and in some instances cases may be appealed from there to the Supreme Court (see ch. 6, Government and Political Dynamics).

The Special Security Corps

Basic police functions are the responsibility of the Special Security Corps (Cuerpo Especial de Seguridad—CES). The CES was created in late 1963, after the military coup of that year, as a replacement for the Civil Guard that had previously performed police duties. Technically, the commander of the CES is the secretary of defense, but day-to-day operations are under the immediate control of the organization's director general, who is responsible for all CES activities. The organization has generally employed over 2,000 men, most of whom have been drawn from the regular army.

As of the late 1960s the director general was assisted by a staff consisting of a subdirector able to assume command while the director was absent, an inspector general, a legal adviser, and a department of public relations. Subordinate headquarters functions and administrative duties were carried out by an administration and logistics section, a personnel and statistics section, a finance office, a telecommunications service, and a medical service.

Below this level the CES was split up between specialized branches organized on a national scale and local units performing general tasks, a pattern closely resembling the organizational structure of the defense forces. The specialized branches have included the National Investigation Corps, the Traffic Department, the frontier and rural units, and the training school.

The National Investigation Corps is composed of intelligence, criminal, identification, and immigration departments; a police laboratory; and a section dealing with minors. It is in charge of dealing with all police cases requiring extensive investigation and has subordinate regional units in the two principal cities and other areas of potential unrest or high crime rates. In addition, the subordinate immigration department has regional offices located at several points along the frontier to help control entry of foreigners into the country.

The frontier and rural units are responsible for combating contraband activities. They were created to watch over isolated rural boundary areas where traffic was insufficient to justify setting up fixed posts. They are also assigned the job of cooperating with other government agencies in preventing criminal actions and of capturing criminals within these zones.

The traffic division handles vehicular traffic problems. It is under the direction of a general traffic commandant and is divided into offices dealing with vehicle inspection, licenses and registration; investigation of accidents; and traffic routing. In the mid-1960s a company of traffic "agents" and a number of patrols were assigned to traffic regulation and control duties in the principal cities.

The most important CES training center is a school in Tegucigalpa that conducts a variety of courses for both recruits and career CES members. As of the mid-1960s the subjects taught included police communications, patrols, principles of investigation, first aid, control of civil disturbances, infantry instruction, civil procedure, penal code, planning for police operations, interrogation studies, and control of contraband. In the first years of the CES, turnover at the school was quite rapid; for example, in the first eight months of 1965 over 100 police corporals and sergeants completed courses there. Other training was conducted by local units, and in some cases CES members obtained police training by attending schools outside the country. Both the United States Army School of the Americas and the International Police Academy in Washington, D.C., have provided this type of instruction to CES officers and enlisted men from time to time.

At the time of its creation, the organization's leaders planned an extensive civic action program to be publicized through the CES magazine, *Vigilante*, and other media. Civic action projects carried out by CES members in 1964 included construction of school desks; establishment of a medical dispensary; cleaning and repair of highways, parks, and other public places; repair and reinstallation of telegraph lines; and a number of similar projects. In general, the program seems to have been directed at completing many small projects rather than a more limited number of large or long-term tasks.

In mid-1970 the CES appeared to have achieved only mixed success and was in the process of being reorganized. An announcement by the defense minister in June 1970 stated that changes would continue being made and that he "intended to cleanse the ranks of the institution." The remarks were made in the context of public attacks on the organization alleging abuses of responsibility by CES members.

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GLOSSARY

amparo—An order of restrain against imprisonment or an administrative act that infringes on one's rights.

BNF—Banco Nacional de Fomento (National Development Bank). Autonomous government institution combining regular commercial banking functions with economic development projects.

cabecera— Literally, capital of a province, district, or nation; as used in Honduras, refers to departmental and municipal capitals.

CACM—Central American Common Market. Composed of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. A regional organization seeking integration of the members' economies.

caserío—A rural settlement too small to be a hamlet; often only a collection of scattered dwellings.

CES—Cuerpo Especial de Seguridad (Special Security Corps). National civil police force.

ejidal—System of landownership in which land belongs to the municipalities.

ejidatario—A farmer who works *ejido (q.v.)*.

ejido—As used in Honduras, refers to lands held in common by a village. In some other countries it means an agricultural cooperative.

encomienda—Derived from the Spanish verb *encomendar* "to entrust"; a legal arrangement by which specified Indians were "entrusted" to deserving Spaniards, who were thereby entitled to labor services from the Indians in return for promoting their physical and spiritual well-being.

fiesta—A popular celebration of religious and secular holidays in which much human energy is released by drinking, dancing, and singing.

gobierno—A Spanish administrative unit immediately subordinate, in the Central American area, to the Captaincy General of Guatemala. *Gobiernos* that were large or far from other settlements were often accorded a high degree of local autonomy.

INA—Instituto Nacional Agrario (National Agrarian Institute). Autonomous government agency empowered to carry out provisions of the agrarian reform law.

INCAP—Instituto Nutricional de Centro América y Panamá (Nutrition Institute of Central America and Panama).

ladino—Non-Indian; an individual of virtually any racial mix who has assumed the attributes of the dominant Hispanic-American culture mixture. First applied in colonial times to acculturated Indians and individuals of mixed heritage who lived in the Spanish settlements, accepting their language and many Hispanic customs. Later extended to all groups that did not espouse an Indian style of life. Label is resented by white members of the upper class who prefer to use it synonymously with *mestizo (q.v.)*.

mestizo—A person of mixed Indian and white (usually Spanish) heritage.

municipio—Municipality; an administrative and political unit similar to a township containing several villages and hamlets.

Nahuatl—The language spoken by the Aztec and other advanced tribes of central Mexico and parts of Central America.

patrón—A person, usually wealthy or influential, who acts as a protector or guardian of another. A common relationship in Latin America.

repartimiento—Derived from the Spanish verb *repartir* "to divide up"; generally used to refer to the first Spanish settlers' practice of seizing Indians at random for forced labor in the mines or enslavement.

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